





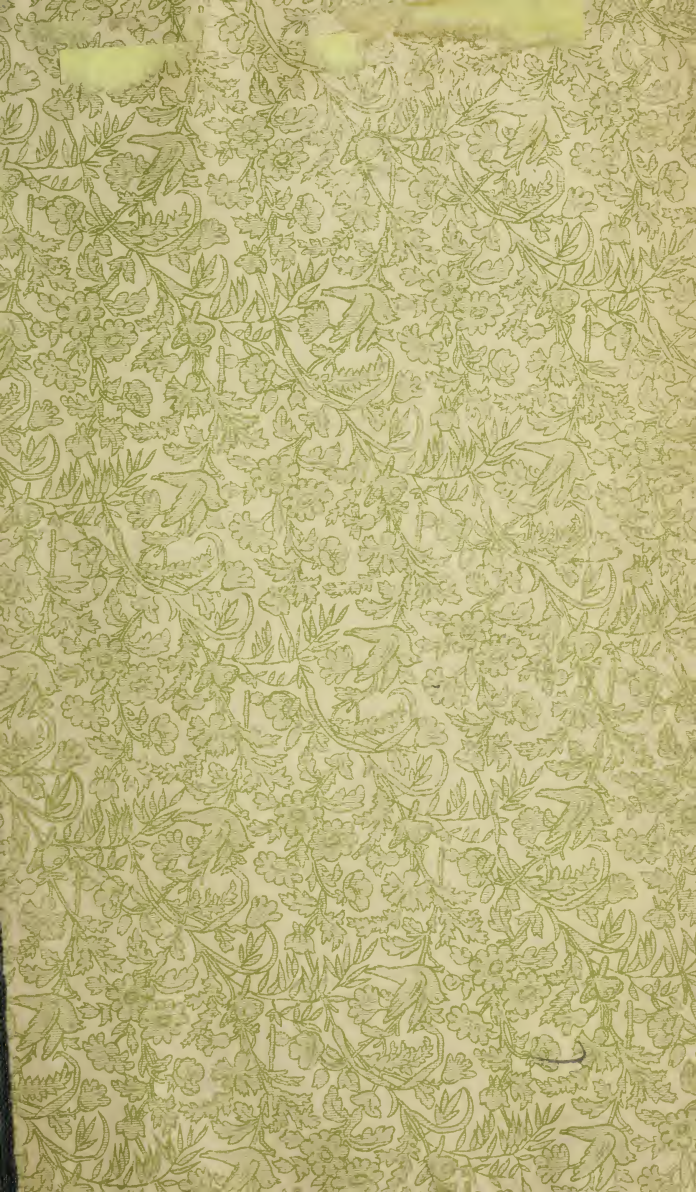
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STORAGE



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THE PRINCESS MARY.

“She came to her senses, and tried to free herself from my embrace. But I held her more firmly ; my cheek touched hers, which glowed like fire.”—Page 174.

A HERO
OF OUR OWN TIMES.

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF LERMONTOF.

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

LONDON:
DAVID BOGUE, 86, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCLIV.

LONDON :

HENRY VIZETELLY, PRINTER AND ENGRAVER,
GOUGH SQUARE, FLEET STREET.

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BRIEF NOTICE

OF

MICHAEL LERMONTOF.

THE present is a book which few people will peruse without a strong desire to know something of its author. It is, however, far easier to excite this curiosity than to allay it; for a single sentence is almost sufficient to sum up the few facts that have reached western Europe respecting the career of Michael Lermontof. We know that he was regarded as one of the most promising disciples of the poet Pouchkin, on the occasion of whose death, in a duel—mourned by all Russia as a national calamity—he wrote an enthusiastic ode, utterly devoid of political allusion, but which the Czar Nicholas, in his hostility to literature, nevertheless resented by forthwith banishing the author of it to the Caucasus.

The Czar, only too happy that death had relieved him from the presence of one poet who had been thrice exiled from the capital, was determined, it

would seem, to check any fresh display of the poetic faculty in the bud. To the Caucasus, therefore, Lermontof was inexorably sent; and while undergoing the imperial sentence the present work, together with a small volume of poems, was written. In about a couple of years after "The Hero of our own Times" had issued from the press, and just as the young author was attaining a deserved popularity, the more educated of the Russian people were surprised and grieved by the intelligence that, like his master Pouchkin, Lermontof had fallen a victim in a deplorable duel. The Czar, although he had, with a pretence of magnanimity, accorded to the thrice banished Pouchkin a public funeral, had not the smallest meed of sympathy to bestow on his disciple. On hearing of Lermontof's death, Nicholas had the brutality to exclaim—"He has lived like a dog, and has died like one!" Such was the imperial estimate of a man against whom no political accusation was ever made, and whose only crime was the possession of faculties which, among other people, are honoured by the epithet of "god-like."

Lermontof has been characterized as one of those natures gifted with energy, at once passionate and concentrated, of which Byron forms perhaps the most magnificent example. A wild, indeed impatient, love of independence appears to have consumed him. Those who knew him best, caution us that his clever and sceptic style of criticism and observation should not

be attributed to the misanthropy of a hardened and discouraged mind, but rather to the result of a forced idleness—to the hatred, however, and not the weariness, of the void. It will be readily admitted that he was not one of those factitious and superficial writers who supply the want of genius with praiseworthy intentions—with half-real half-dissembled convictions; but that he was a true and a great poet. No other Russian ever wrote verses so energetic in their simplicity, and with so great a contempt for all vain ornament, as those few poems that remain to us as examples of the genius of Michael Lermontof.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE preface of a book is a thing at once important and subordinate; it may serve as an explanation of the work, or as a justification of the author when attacked by critics. But, generally, a reader cares but little for the moral aim of a work, and quite as little for the sentence pronounced on it by the reviewers; and therefore it is, that a preface rarely finds a reader. 'Tis a pity, particularly in Russia. Our public is still so new, and so simple, that it does not comprehend a fable, unless terminated by an explanatory moral. It cannot see a jest, nor discover the aim of irony; in a word, it has been badly brought up. It ignores, to this hour, that, in good company, as in a good book, a plain, downright rebuke is not admissible; that modern civilisation has a weapon more powerful, almost invisible, and of which the blows are more terrible—more certain. Our public somewhat resembles a simple provincial, who, after having listened to the conversation of two envoys from

rival powers, should retain the conviction that each of them was disposed to sacrifice the interests of his cabinet to considerations of personal friendship.

It is thus that, even quite lately, the ideas printed in this book have been taken, to the very letter, by many readers, and even by reviewers. Some have been shocked at our offering them for a model such a personage as Petchorin; others thought they discovered that the author had presented to the public his own portrait, and that of his friends—a pitiful jest, that has not even the merit of novelty. It seems that everything else renews itself in Russia, except these wretched puerilities. The most agreeably-told tale will with difficulty escape attacks that soon assume a personal character.

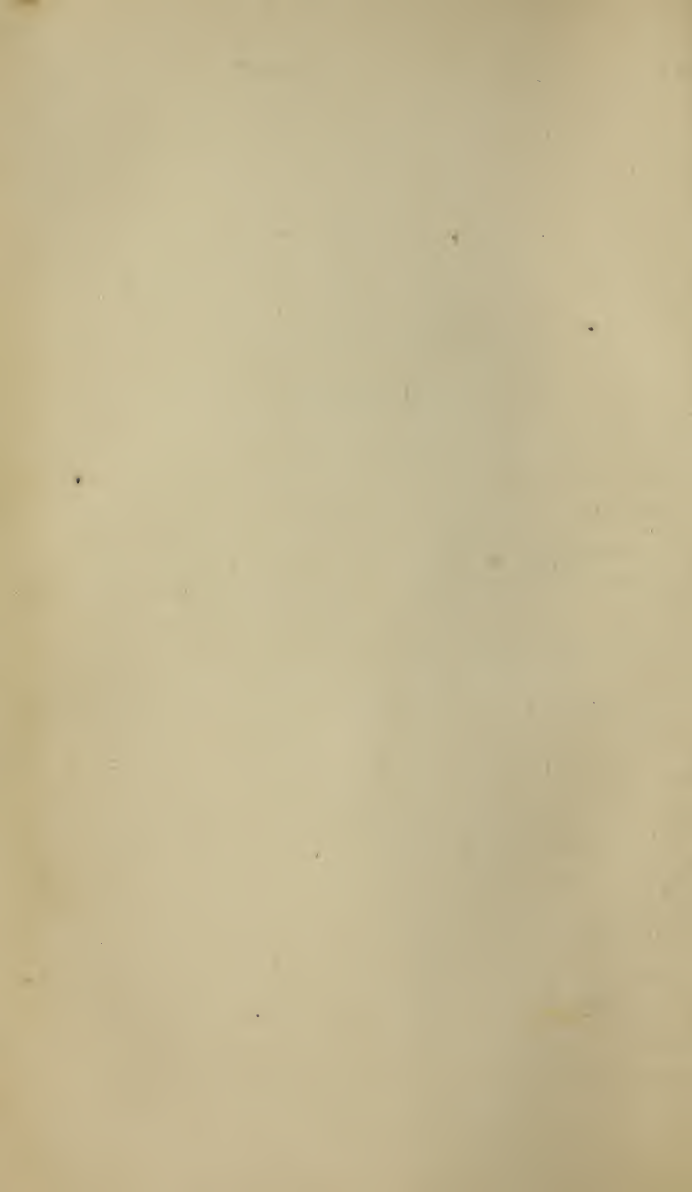
The “Hero of our Own Times,” courteous reader, is, indeed, a portrait, but not an individual one; it personifies the vices of our whole generation. You will object, perhaps, that no man could attain to such a degree of perversity; but I ask why, if you admit, as probabilities, the crimes daily committed by exalted villany, you refuse to believe in the reality of a Petchorin? You have read with interest far more monstrous conceptions. Why cannot this character, were it only as the creature of imagination, find favour in your eyes? Is it not because it is sketched with more regard for truth than you are willing to allow?

You will say, that mankind can profit nothing by such sketches. Permit me to be of a different way of think-

ing. The abuse of sweetmeats ruins the stomach ; it requires bitter remedies, and food less insipid. Let it not be thought, however, that the writer of these pages has the presumption to set himself up as a reformer of the vices of society. Heaven guard him from such folly ! He simply meant to portray, in an amusing manner, a character of our own time, according as it presented itself to his own observation ; and one that, for his misfortune and yours, is more common than people will admit. It was enough to denounce the evil : as for the remedy, Heaven alone knows what that may be !

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B E L A.

I WAS coming from Tiflis ; my travelling carriage was lightly laden, for a single portmanteau, half filled with notes on Georgia, formed my sole baggage. Fortunately for the reader, the greater part of these notes are lost ; and yet more fortunately for myself, the portmanteau with the rest of its contents accompanied me safely home.

When I entered the valley of Koitaour, the sun was just disappearing behind the snowy crests of the mountain ridges. The Ossete who drove me, used every endeavour to hurry on his steeds, in order to arrive at Mount Koitaour before nightfall, singing all the while up to, nay beyond, the very top of his voice.

The aspect of this valley is truly magnificent. On all sides are inaccessible mountains, red-tinted rocks, covered with green ivy, and crowned with clusters of plane-trees ; here and there upon its slopes, is to be traced the yellow line of a torrent bed, and above all, at an elevation that fatigues the sight, a golden fringe of

snow; whilst in the depth of the valley, the Aragva, after having received the waters of some nameless torrent, which rushed wildly forth from a dark cavern, unfolds itself like a silver ribband, or a glittering scaled serpent. We pulled up at the foot of the mountain. A score of Georgians and mountaineers were grouped near the station; and, as is usual with these people, their conversation assumed all the energy of a lively dispute. Not far off a caravan of camels had halted for the night.

I was obliged to have oxen yoked to my carriage, for this accursed mountain slope is a league and a half in length, and the icy frost of autumn added to the difficulty of the ascent.

As there was no help for it, I hired six oxen, and some Ossetes to drive them. One of these carried my portmanteau on his shoulder, while the others urged the beasts forward; their efforts in this respect, however, were limited to a free use of their voices.

Another carriage followed close behind us, and though it was drawn by only four oxen, and was filled with a great pile of baggage, yet it rattled along with the greatest ease. This appeared to me strange. The owner of this equipage followed on foot, smoking a silver-mounted pipe, such as are manufactured in Kabardia; he wore the frock coat of an officer, but without epaulettes, and a fur cap after the Circassian fashion. He might be about fifty. His bronzed visage announced an acquaintance of long standing with the sun of the Caucasus; and his moustachios, in their premature

whiteness, contrasted strangely with an exterior, expressive at once of vigour and resolution. I approached and saluted him. Without uttering a syllable, he returned my salutation, sending forth from his mouth at the same time a copious puff of smoke.

"It appears," said I, "that we are both following the same road."

Still without answering, he bowed his acquiescence.

"I presume you're going to Stavropol?"

"Precisely so. With a government convoy."

"Would you be kind enough to explain to me how it happens, that your carriage, heavily laden as it is, gets on in the best possible manner with four oxen; while mine, which is nearly empty, is moved with the greatest difficulty by six, without reckoning the Ossetes, whose help, I suppose, ought to be considered as something."

He smiled a knowing smile, and surveyed me attentively.

"You have not been long in the Caucasus?"

"About a year," I answered.

He smiled a second time.

"But I asked you ——."

"Why, you see, these Asiatics are sly rascals; you think, perhaps, that they are of use because they halloo? The devil himself knows what it is they shout; but it is a fact that the beasts guess at their meaning. Yoke twenty of them to your carriage, and in despite of this species of encouragement, they'll

scarcely stir. A rascally set! There's nothing to be got out of them. They only know how to tax travellers. It must be allowed they have been spoiled. You'll see they'll ask you for something to drink. They'll not find me requiring their help. I know them too well."

"Have you served long in the Caucasus?" I asked.

"Ay, ever since the time of Alexander Petrovitch, (Yermolof)," replied the officer, with the proud air of a veteran. "When he came to take the command of the line, I was a sub-lieutenant, and I have advanced two steps in the wars with the mountaineers."

"And now?"

"Now, I am in active service in the third battalion of the line. And you, sir, may I ask in my turn?"

I replied to his inquiry, and our conversation terminated. We continued to walk on side by side in silence.

Towards the summit of the mountain we found some snow. The sun had set, and night succeeded to day, as it ever does in the East, without intervening gradation. Still the light reflected from the snow, enabled us easily to distinguish the road, which continued up hill, but with a less steep ascent.

After having had my portmanteau placed in my carriage, and exchanged my oxen for horses, I turned to take a last look at the valley, but it was entirely hidden by the mist which issued like waves from the sides of the mountain. At this height no sound reached us. The Ossetes asked me for drink money, but the Captain

apostrophised them in such a style, that they vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

“There’s a delightful brood,” said he; “they cannot ask for bread in Russ, yet they will say intelligibly enough: ‘Give us something to drink, my officer.’ I like the Tartars even better than these fellows; at least, they are not such drunkards.”

We were now only a quarter of a league from the station. Around us all was calm; so calm, that one could have tracked a fly by the buzzing of its wings.

On our left, yawned a dark abyss; above us, were the dark blue mountain summits, whose peaks stood out against the horizon, from which the last pale glimmering of twilight was fading. In the slate-coloured azure of the heavens, the stars were beginning to twinkle, and one was tempted to believe them far higher above our heads, than they appear to be in our northern regions. On both sides of the road, were huge, projecting masses of black, naked rock; and, here and there, some clusters of small trees pierced through the snow; but not even a withered leaf stirred, and I listened, with delight, in the midst of this deep sleep of nature, to the breathing of our wearied horses, and the tinkling of the little post-bell.

“To-morrow will be a splendid day,” I remarked to the Captain.

Without answering me, he pointed with his finger to a high mountain peak, which rose right in front of us.

“Well?” said I.

“It is the Gout Gora—see how it smokes!”

And, in fact, the Gout Gora did really smoke. Up its sides, fleecy masses of vapour were creeping; while, at its summit, one remarked a black cloud, looking like a stain upon the sky.

Already, we could perceive the station, and the roofs of the neighbouring cottages; already, our eyes welcomed the hospitable fires—when, all at once, a damp and freezing wind sprung up; the rocky chasm sent forth its dreary howlings, in reply to the voice of the storm; and a fine, drizzling rain set in. I had only time to throw my cloak over me, before the snow fell fast and thick. I looked deferentially towards the Captain.

“We must pass the night here,” he said, evidently somewhat vexed; “for, in this sort of weather, one must not think of venturing into the mountains.”

There was no hope of a night’s lodging at the post-house itself; we were conducted, therefore, to a smoky hut. I invited my travelling companion to drink tea, for I had brought with me a metal teapot—my only consolation during my excursions in the Caucasus.

The hut, in which we sought shelter, was built against a rock; three muddy, slippery steps led up to its door. As I groped my way in, I came bolt up against a cow—the stable, it seems, served for the antechamber. I knew not which way to turn—what with the bleating of sheep, on the one side, and the barking of a dog, on the other. At length, a faint ray of light allowed me to distinguish an opening that might pass for a door.

The roof of the hut was supported by two smoky rafters. The hut itself was of tolerable size, and full of people; an aguish, miserable sort of a fire was burning in the middle of the floor, and the smoke, that the wind drove back through the opening of the roof, was so thick, that I was, for some time, unable to distinguish any of the objects around. Near the hearth squatted two old crones, a meagre Georgian, and a heap of ragged children. There was nothing to be done, but to submit to circumstances; so we lighted our pipes, after having established ourselves, as best we could, in the neighbourhood of the fire; and our kettle soon began to send forth a most delectable murmur.

“Poor creatures!” said I to the Captain, pointing to our tattered hosts, who remained staring at us, in stupid amazement.

“Miserable race!” he replied; “it’s beyond belief. They have nothing in their favour—they are capable of nothing. The Kabardians, the Tchetchenzes, are little else but savages and thieves, I grant you, but, still, they are daring rascals; while these vermin, your Ossetes, don’t even know the value of arms. You’ll not find one of them with a decent poignard—they are a wretched race!”

“Did you live any time among the Tchetchenzes?”

“I was ten years in a fort, with my company, near Kamennoi-Brod—do you know it?”

“I have heard of it.”

“Those murderous rascals did not spare us. Now, thank Heaven! they are rather quieter; it is not so

very long ago, since one could not venture into the valley, without meeting one of those hairy devils in ambush. There was no time for a yawn—a slip-knot was round one's neck, or a ball through one's head. What scoundrels!"

My curiosity urged me on. "You have not gone through all this without having met with some adventures in your time?" I remarked.

"No, indeed! Adventures—ah! I've had my share of them."

Here the Captain twisted his left moustachio, and, moving his head, somewhat after the manner of a pendulum, appeared lost in meditation. I had a strong desire to extract something in the shape of an anecdote out of him, which was natural enough, with a person who wanders, far and wide, for the sake of picking up stray incidents for the benefit of the public. Meanwhile, tea was ready. I drew from my portmanteau, two travelling cups, which I filled with the grateful beverage, and placed one before the Captain. He raised it to his lips, sipped a few drops of the steaming fluid, and repeated, as if speaking to himself,—“Yes—I have had my share of adventures!"

This exclamation acted as a stimulus to my hopes. I knew the fondness of the veterans of the Caucasus for spinning a yarn; they so rarely have an opportunity of indulging in that way. You will meet with men who have been, for five years, at the head of their company, in some wretched out-of-the-way place; and who, during those five years, have not once been greeted

with the familiar every-day phrase—"How do you do, Captain?" for this simple reason: that the junior officer on duty says, and ought to say,—“I have the honour to wish you good morning.”

There must be, however, ample matter for conversation, in the midst of this wild and singular people. There, each day has its dangers, and everything bears the stamp of originality. It is to be regretted, that we Russians do not write more.

“If you would like any rum,” I said, to my guest, “I have some white rum from Tiflis—the night is very cold.”

“Thanks; but I never touch it.”

“Why so?”

“Because of a vow I have made. One day, you must know—I was only a sub-lieutenant at the time—we had been drinking like Poles. In the night the alarm was given. We ran to arms in a state that you can pretty well imagine. Yermolof knew it, and he bullied us in style. Heaven and earth! what a rage he was in! We were very near having our accounts settled by a court-martial. You see, that in a country where one ought always to be on one’s guard, if one begins to drink, one’s done for.”

I began to despair of my story.

“Let me tell you, when the Circassians get at their *bouza*, whether it be at a wedding or at a funeral, they are not long before they draw their swords. Once, I had a narrow escape, and with a Prince with whom we were at peace, too!”

“How was that?”

“Why, in this way——.”

Here the Captain interrupted himself to fill his pipe; which done, he continued in these words:—

“I must tell you that I was with my men in a fort, on the other side of the Terek; this was nearly five years ago. One day, it was in the autumn, there comes a convoy of provisions, escorted by a young man of about five-and-twenty. He waited on me in full uniform, and told me he had orders to remain in the fort, under my eye.

“His waist was so slender, his complexion so clear, his uniform so irreproachably fresh, that it was easy to divine that he came from the capital. A few questions on my part, and affirmative answers on his, proved to me that my conjectures were correct.

“‘Sir,’ said I, ‘I am delighted to see you among us. The place is not the most agreeable in the world, but I will do all I can to make you as comfortable as possible; and in the first place, if you think proper, we will lay aside all ceremony. Call me, therefore, simply Maximus Maximitch. This full uniform, too, is unnecessary; the foraging cap will be quite sufficient.’

“His quarters were allotted to him, and he established himself in the fort.”

“His name? I pray!”

“Gregory Alexanderowitch Petchorin; a charming youth, although rather eccentric. He would hunt, for example, in the cold and rain for days together; while everyone else was half frozen, and their teeth chattering

with the cold, he hardly seemed to think about it. At other times he would keep his room, dreading lest a breath of air should give him cold, and if his window shutter chanced to flap to, he would start and turn pale; and yet I have seen him with my own eyes attack a wild boar. Sometimes, he remained for hours together without opening his lips; but then to make up for it, when he was in the humour, he became inexhaustible, and you were ready to split your sides with laughter, whether you would or no; in short, he was original to a degree that cannot be matched. He must be rich, for he possessed heaps of most expensive jewels and gew-gaws."

"Did he remain long with you?"

"About a year; it is a time that I shall never forget. Such scenes! It seems to me that there are people predestined before their birth to adventures that could only happen to themselves."

This word adventure probably gave to my features the expression of a mark of interrogation; and the Captain, as if by an effort of politeness, continued in the following manner:—

"Six versts from the fort, lived a Prince with whom we were at peace. His son, a boy of fifteen, often came to visit us under one pretext or another. It must be confessed that we treated him—Petchorin and myself—like a spoiled child. He was a very demon of cleverness and audacity. He would throw his cap on the ground, and pick it up while his horse was in full gallop; and you should have seen him handle a

gun! He had, however, a grand fault—an immoderate love of money. Petchorin once jokingly promised him a ducat, if he stole the finest goat out of his father's flock; the next night the rogue brought it to us tied by the horns. At the least sarcasm, although in jest, the whites of his eyes would redden, and his hand seek his dagger. 'Beware, Azamat,' I would say to him, 'take heed, this will turn out badly.'

"One day, the old Prince came to invite us to the wedding of his eldest daughter. Our regard for his hospitality, and the alliance that existed between us, would not allow us to refuse. We arrived at the Prince's dwelling at the hour agreed upon. As we crossed the village, the dogs barked enough to stun one, and the women ran to hide themselves. The open court of the Prince's house was already crowded; for you must know that when the Asiatics celebrate a marriage, they invite indiscriminately all whom they happen to meet.

"They received us with every imaginable honour, and led us at once into the hall.

"Before entering, Petchorin had remarked to me, that the Circassian women were not worthy of their reputation for beauty.

"Wait awhile,' I answered. I had my reasons for this. While defending the fair sex, however, I took care to note where they led our horses to; with these people two precautions are better than one."

"And what are their marriage ceremonies like?" I inquired.

“Nothing out of the way,” replied the Captain. “First of all the Mullah reads them a passage from the Koran; then presents are made to the young couple, and to the parents. They eat, they drink *bouza*, they dance a species of jig; and some ragged clown, as dirty as he well can be, mounted on a lame hack, goes through all sorts of contortions to amuse the honourable company; lastly, they have a ball after their fashion. An old musician plays upon a three-stringed instrument, of which the name has escaped me, but which is something like our *balaleika*. The young men and girls place themselves in rows, opposite to each other, and sing, and clap their hands. A young man and a young woman leave the ranks and address one another alternately in verses,—anything that comes into their heads,—which they chant in a drawling sort of tone, and the rest repeat it as a chorus.

“Petchorin and myself were seated in the place of honour. Suddenly, the youngest daughter of the Prince advanced towards Petchorin—she might be about fifteen—and began a complimentary sort of speech or chant.”

“Do you not remember,” I asked, “the words she addressed to him?”

“They were something to this effect:—‘Our young dancers have graceful figures, their caftans are embroidered with silver; but the figure of the young Russian officer is yet more graceful, and his lace is gold. He towers above them like a young poplar, but we shall not behold him grow and flourish in our gardens.’

Petchorin rose, bowed to the young Princess, placed one hand on his forehead, and the other on his heart, and begged me to translate his answer to her.

“‘Well,’ I said in a low voice to Petchorin, when she was out of hearing, ‘what do you think of her?’”

“‘She is charming! bewitching! and her name?’”

“‘Bela.’”

“She was indeed a lovely girl: tall, slender, with dark eyes like those of a gazelle, that seemed to look into your very soul. Petchorin never lost sight of her, and she on her part stole more than one sidelong glance at him. He was not the only one present who thought her beautiful. From a remote corner of the hall, two eyes, ardent and motionless, were gazing intently, passionately upon Bela. I soon recognized Kazbitch. This Kazbitch, I must tell you, was on neither decidedly hostile nor decidedly pacific terms with the Russians. Although often suspected, he had never been detected in any hostile enterprise. Now and then he used to bring sheep to the fort, and sell them to us at a reasonable price; but whatever he asked, had to be given to him without bargaining. He would have allowed himself to be cut to pieces rather than bate a copeck. It was said of him, that he took no unwilling part in certain expeditions beyond the Kouban; and in truth, judging by his appearance, he would have made a splendid brigand: he was short, muscular, broad-shouldered, and active as a very devil.

“His *beschmeet* was always in rags, but his arms were bright with silver, and his horse had not its rival in all

Kabardia. It was in fact the perfection of a steed. More than one envied it, and more than once an attempt had been made to rob him of it. I can fancy I see it now before me, black as jet, with its pasterns like spindles; and as for its eyes! Bela herself could scarcely boast of finer; then, too, its strength! it would carry you twelve leagues without stopping; and it had been so well broken that it would run at the sound of its master's voice just like a dog, while it was as obedient as a child. Will you believe it, there was no necessity to tie him up? in short, he was the very beau-ideal of a brigand's horse. That evening Kazbitch appeared more gloomy than usual, and I remarked that he wore his coat of mail under his *beschmeet*. 'It's not for nothing,' I said to myself, 'that Kazbitch has put on his shirt of iron; he has something in his head.'

"The hall was oppressively hot; I went out to breathe the air. The mountains were already shrouded in darkness, and clouds of mist were issuing from their clefts. It occurred to me to give a look at our horses, and satisfy myself that they wanted for nothing. Mine was a magnificent one, and more than one Kabardian, while examining it with a wistful eye, had exclaimed, '*Jakchi iklie! tchetz iakchi!*'"

"I stole along the palisade, and suddenly heard the sound of voices. That of Azamat at once struck me; his companion spoke only at intervals, and in a lower tone.

"'What can they have to say to each other?' I said to myself, and drew nearer to the enclosure, that I

might not lose a word of their conversation. Sometimes the songs and the din of voices within doors drowned it, and prevented me from making out what they said.

“‘You have got a superb horse, and if I were my own master, and had a herd of three hundred mares, I would give you half of them for your steed, Kazbitch.’

“‘Ah! its Kazbitch,’ said I, and I remembered the coat of mail.

“‘Ay,’ replied Kazbitch, after a silence of some moments; ‘you would go far to find its equal. One day, it was beyond the Terek, I had set out with a band of companions to hunt down some Russian horses; but we were out of luck, and had dispersed, some of us going one way, some another. I had four Cossacks at my heels. I heard already behind me the yells of the villains; before me lay a thick copse. I crouched down on the saddle, recommended myself to Allah, and for the first time I insulted my horse by letting him feel the spur. His flight among the branches was like that of a bird; the thorns tore and slashed my garments; the dead boughs slapped me in the face; my horse cleared every obstacle, and breasted his way through the thickest underwood. It would perhaps have been wiser to have allowed him to take his own course, and to have hidden myself in the forest, but I could not make up my mind to part from him. At length the Prophet rewarded me. More than one ball had whizzed close to my ears. The Cossacks were gaining

on me rapidly ; a deep ravine barred my onward progress. My horse, after an instant's pause, leapt it ; the opposite bank crumbled beneath the pressure of his hind feet, and he remained suspended by his fore legs. I let go the reins, and jumped into the chasm. My horse was saved. He made one spring, and regained his footing. The Cossacks had seen all, but did not care to descend into the ravine to look for me. Doubtless, they thought I was killed on the spot ; and I heard them start off in pursuit of my horse. The blood rushed back to my heart. I crept along the ravine, hidden amid the thick grass, and looked about. The wood ended there. I saw some Cossacks debouching across the plain, and my horse bounding before them. The whole pack were yelling frightfully. One of them was twice on the point of throwing his *lasso* over my horse's neck. I trembled, my eyes closed, and I prayed fervently. After some minutes, I looked again, and saw my noble steed, with his tail spread, flying over the plain, free as the winds of heaven ; while the Cossacks, out-distanced, were toiling along the steppes on their jaded beasts. By Allah ! this is truth, nothing but the truth ! I remained sculking in the ravine till night-fall, when, all at once, I heard amid the darkness the gallop of a horse ; it neighed and pawed the ground : I recognised my faithful steed ! From that time we have never been separated.' As he finished this recital, the Tartar tenderly patted his horse's neck, bestowing on it at the same time the most endearing epithets.

“‘If I had a herd of a thousand mares,’ said Azamat with a sigh, ‘I would give the whole to you for this noble animal.’

“‘And I would refuse the exchange,’ answered Kazbitch, coldly.

“‘Hear me, Kazbitch: you are good as brave; you know that my father, for fear of the Russians, forbids my making any excursions in the mountains; give me up your horse, and I will do anything for you, everything that you ask of me. Shall I rob my father of his best carbine, his finest scimitar? Speak but the word—the blade was forged in Kurdistan. If you but lay your hand against its edge, it seems as though the steel would cut of itself. And as for his coat-of-mail, it is like your own, without price.’

“Kazbitch remained silent.

“‘The first time,’ continued Azamat, ‘that I saw your horse prancing and capering under you, its nostrils dilating, and the sparks flying from the stones beneath its hoofs, I felt within me a something—I know not what. Everything else has now become valueless to me. I look with contempt on the finest steeds that my father possesses, and feel ashamed to mount them. I am completely overcome with grief; whole days together, I seat myself on the slopes of the mountains, and always before my mind’s eye is your beautiful horse, with its graceful paces, its polished back, straight as an arrow. To me it appears as though its intelligent eye sought mine, for all the world as if it had a something to tell me. If you refuse to let me have that horse, Kazbitch, I shall die!’

“And the voice of the boy faltered with emotion; he sobbed aloud. I must tell you that Azamat had a will of iron, and that from his childhood no one had ever seen him shed a tear.

“A scornful laugh was Kazbitch’s only answer.

“‘Listen!’ said Azamat in a resolute tone, ‘you may see that I am prepared for anything. If you consent, I will give you up my sister. Ah! how gracefully she dances, how beautifully she sings; the stuffs which she embroiders in gold, are wonderful to look at. She would eclipse the fairest creature in the harem of the Turkish Padishah. Do you consent? Speak, Kazbitch! You shall wait for me in the valley to-morrow, there, near the spring. I will take her that way to the neighbouring village. Speak but the word, and she is yours. What, you hesitate? Is Bela then not worth thy horse?’

“For a long, long time Kazbitch remained silent; at length I heard him hum this old song:

“‘Our maidens are our mountains’ choicest flowers;
Like summer lightning flash their bright black eyes!
Happy the youth who with them spends his hours;
Happier still who from their beauty flies!

Women and gold are, after all, the same:
Women with gold are bought—But gold ne’er buys
A courser true! He moves a living flame,
And conquers; or, to save his rider, dies!’

“In vain Azamat implored, wept, swore; at length Kazbitch, out of patience, said abruptly:

“‘Leave off, young madman, that you are; how can you presume to think of mounting my horse; before he

had taken three steps, he would throw you out of the stirrups, and break your neck upon some rock.'

" 'I,' exclaimed the boy, wild with rage, and his poignard resounded against the cuirass of his adversary. A powerful arm threw him off, and he fell against the palisade, which echoed back the shock.

" 'This is turning out badly,' said I to myself. I ran to the stable to unloose our horses, and led them towards the back-gate.

" Two minutes later, and the whole house was in an uproar. This is what had happened:—Azamat had re-entered precipitately with his clothes torn, saying, that Kazbitch had tried to murder him. Each one seized his gun, and the sport commenced. On all sides were yells, blows, and firing of arms. Our friend Kazbitch was already in the saddle, moving about from group to group among the crowd, like one possessed, and brandishing his scimitar.

" 'Gregory Alexandrowitch,' said I to my friend, taking him by the arm, 'its bad to get drunk among strangers—come along; believe me, it's the best thing you can do.'

" 'Pshaw, let us see how it will all end.'

" 'It can only end badly. These Asiatics never do otherwise. They have fuddled themselves with *bousa*, and now they fall to fighting.'

" We mounted our steeds, and galloped post haste to the fort."

" And Kazbitch," I inquired of the Captain, "what became of him?"

“Heaven only knows! those rascals have great tenacity of life—I have seen them in action; a man riddled like a sieve with bayonet wounds, will fight with his lance as with a two-handed sword. Perhaps he was wounded, but at all events he decamped.”

After a pause the Captain resumed, at the same time stamping his foot upon the ground.

“There is one thing that I will never forgive myself for having done. On our return to the fort, the devil prompted me to tell Petchorin all that I had heard. He laughed, but at the same moment he drew up his plan.”

“What plan?—pray go on.”

“Since I have begun, I may as well tell you all: Some days after, Azamat came to the fort as usual, and went to see Petchorin, who always gave him some dainty or other. I remember perfectly, that the conversation turned upon horses. Petchorin began to praise that of Kazbitch. ‘What lightness,’ said he, ‘what beauty of form! it is like an antelope—nothing can be more perfect.’

“The eyes of the young Tartar sparkled; Petchorin did not seem to notice it. I tried to change the conversation, but he always returned to Kazbitch’s horse. This invariably happened each time that Azamat came. At the end of three weeks I remarked a change in the boy—he was visibly thinner. It was like the effect of love, as it is described in novels. Gregory Alexandrowitch had goaded him into a species of madness. ‘Azamat,’ he said to him one day, ‘I see that you have an unhappy passion for that horse, and unfortunately

you are not very likely to get hold of it. Let's see, now,—what will you give to the man who should make you a present of it?’

“‘Anything that he would ask,’ replied the young mountaineer.

“‘In this case, I undertake to procure it for you ; but on one condition, and only one. Do you swear to fulfil it?’

“‘I swear ! And you?’

“‘Certainly, I swear to put you in possession of Kazbitch's horse, if you put me in possession of your sister Bela. I hope you are content with the bargain.’

“Azamat was silent.

“‘You will not? Be it so ! I thought you were a man, and yet you are but a child. In truth you are but young to manage such a steed.’

“The boy reddened with anger.

“‘And my father !’ he exclaimed, with a faltering voice.

“‘Your father,—does he never leave home?’

“‘Ah ! you remind me,’ said Azamat.

“‘Is it agreed?’

“‘It is,’ he murmured faintly, and turning pale as as death. ‘And when?’

“‘The next time that Kazbitch comes here; he has promised to bring some sheep to the fort. The rest is my business.’

“The bargain was concluded. In good truth it was no very creditable affair. I spoke of it afterwards

to Petchorin : he replied, 'That the Circassian girl would only be too happy to be his ; that, according to their customs, he would be to her as a husband. That as for Kazbitch, he was a rascal who would only be treated as he deserved.' I knew not what to answer, and he knew so well how to calm one's scruples !

"One day, then, Kazbitch came to offer us some sheep, and some honey. I told him to come again the next day.

"It was as though it had happened on purpose ; a few hours later Azamat made his appearance.

" 'Listen,' said Petchorin to him ; 'to-morrow Karagos will be in my power. Bring me Bela this night, or never shall you set eyes on the beautiful steed.' And Azamat ran in all haste to the village. In the evening, Petchorin armed himself, and rode out of the fort.

"I never knew exactly how they had concerted this expedition ; at any rate, when they returned at night-fall, the sentinel saw a woman lying across Azamat's saddle. The captive was bound hand and foot, and a veil covered her head."

"And the horse ?" I inquired.

"Patience ! he's coming.

"The next day, Kazbitch brought his honey and his sheep. After having tied up his horse, he came to me. I ordered some tea for him. He was but a brigand ; still this brigand was my guest.

"We were speaking of different things. All at once I saw him start and change colour. He rushed

to the window, which unfortunately looked only into the yard.

“ ‘What’s the matter?’ said I.

“ ‘My horse! My horse!’ exclaimed he, trembling from head to foot.

“ ‘In fact, I heard the sound of a horse’s gallop.

“ ‘Some Cossack has arrived,’ I remarked.

“ ‘No, no! Oh! a curse upon him!’ he exclaimed, foaming with rage; and he rushed from the room like an angry leopard.

“ ‘In two bounds he had reached the door, the sentry tried to barricade the way with his musket; Kazbitch leaped over the piece, and the next instant he was running along on the high-road.

“ ‘A cloud of dust was perceptible in the distance. It was Azamat, flying at the full speed of his newly-acquired courser. Still running, Kazbitch drew forth his rifle from its case, and fired; we heard a report. He stopped a moment, long enough to convince himself that he had missed his aim; then, perverse as a true pagan, he dashed the weapon against a stone, and broke it into pieces. Then he threw himself upon the ground, and sobbed like a child.

“ ‘His outcries had attracted a crowd round the fort; he was hemmed in and questioned on all sides, but he would see—would hear nothing. Each person formed his own conclusions; and at length, all left him. I ordered the amount of our purchase to be placed near him; he would not touch it; he laid himself down with his face to the ground, as though he were dead, and

remained the whole night in that position. The next day he returned to the fort, to endeavour to discover who was the thief. The sentry, who had seen Azamat let loose the horse, and then gallop off, informed him of all the circumstances. Kazbitch on hearing the name of Azamat, ran like a madman to the village where the Prince lived."

"And the father?" inquired I.

"He had been absent some days, and this circumstance had facilitated the enterprise. At his return, he found neither his daughter nor his son. Azamat, cunning as he was, judged that it would be all over with him if he were caught. Since that time no one has heard of him. He probably joined some band of marauders on the Terek or the Kouban, where he has very likely left his bones—a specific cure for all the evils and embarrassments of this world. All I know is, that in this unfortunate affair, I had my full share of troubles. When I learned that the Circassian was with Petchorin, I donned my epaulettes, belted on my sword, and went to his quarters. I found him in his outer room, lying on the sofa, supporting his head with one hand, while in the other he still held his pipe, although it had burned itself out. The door of the inner room was locked. I remarked all this at a glance.

"I coughed, and tapped the floor lightly with the heel of my boot. He still pretended not to hear.

"'Lieutenant!' said I, in a tone that I endeavoured to render severe; 'do you not perceive my presence?'

"'Ah, how do you do, Maximus Maximitch! You

will smoke a pipe, of course, won't you ?' said he, without stirring.

" 'Excuse me. It is not Maximus Maximitch who is here. It is the Captain.'

" 'It's all the same ; perhaps you'll take some tea ? If you knew ——.'

" 'I know all,' I continued, approaching the sofa.

" 'I am very glad of it ; for to tell you the truth, I am not much in the humour for entering into details.'

" 'Lieutenant ! you have committed a fault, the responsibility of which falls upon me.'

" 'Come, come ! we have gone halves in everything, since I don't know how long.'

" 'This is no time for jesting. Your sword, if you please !'

" 'Mitka, my sword !'

" Mitka brought it.

" Having performed my duty, I seated myself on the sofa, and said to him :—

" 'Gregory Alexandrowitch, you must own that this is not well done.'

" 'Where's the great harm ?'

" 'You have acted very wrong in carrying off Bela. Curse that Azamat ! Come, allow that you have done wrong !'

" 'I have done right, since she pleases me !'

" What the deuce could one say to that ! I was dumbfounded. However, I ended by declaring that if her father claimed her, he must positively give her up.

“ ‘I dare say,’ said Petchorin.

“ ‘And if he hears she is here ?’

“ ‘How can he hear it ?’

“ ‘I could make him no answer.

“ ‘Hear me, Maximus Maximitch,’ replied he, slightly raising himself from his recumbent posture. ‘I know you to be an honest man. If we give Bela back to this savage, either he will stab her, or he will sell her. The thing is done ; we should only be purposely making bad worse. Leave the Circassian with me, and keep my sword.’

“ ‘At least, let me see her,’ said I.

“ ‘She is in the next room ; but just now it is useless to try to speak to her ; she is crouched up in a corner, with her coverlet wrapped round her. She is shy and timid as a fawn. I have placed near her a woman who can speak nothing but Tartar, whom I have told to take care of her, and gradually accustom her to the idea, that henceforward she belongs to me ; for mine, and none else’s shall she be,’ he added, striking the table with his clenched fist.

“ ‘I ended by giving up the point. What could one do ? It is ever so with some people ; one discusses, one disputes with them, to come round at last to their opinions.’”

“ ‘How did matters terminate ? Did Petchorin succeed in overcoming Bela’s timid reserve ? Or, did the poor girl die of grief for her family and her country ?’”

“ ‘As to her family, you have seen how tender the brother was. Heaven only knows what the father was

capable of doing! As to her country, she could see, from the fort, the same mountains she was accustomed to look upon at home; for these barbarians this is all-sufficient. Then, Petchorin offered her some new present every day. At first she proudly refused to accept of anything, and the presents formed the perquisites of her companion, who became in consequence more and more attentive in her duties. With presents, look you, one sooner or later arrives at anything. What will a woman not do for a piece of coloured frippery! Nevertheless, the struggle lasted some time; sufficiently long for him to learn Tartar, and for her to become familiar with Russ. By degrees she grew accustomed to the presence of Petchorin; sometimes, indeed, she stole a glance at him; but she was always sad. When she warbled one of her country's songs, it was with so melancholy an expression, that I felt myself deeply moved while listening to her from an adjoining room.

“One day, I witnessed a scene that I shall never forget. As I passed her window, which happened to be open, I cast a look into the apartment. She was seated upon a stool, her head bent forward. Petchorin was standing before her.

“‘Listen, my Peri!’ said he; ‘as, sooner or later, you must be mine, what do you gain by torturing me? If you have given your heart to some Circassian, speak, and you are free this very instant!’

“The young girl gave a scarcely perceptible start, and shook her head.

“ ‘Perhaps,’ added Petchorin, ‘you have an unconquerable aversion to me.’

“ She sighed.

“ ‘Do you fear to offend your religion, which forbids you to love me? Believe me, Allah is the father of all races. Since He allows me to love you, how should He be angry at your loving me?’

“ Here, as if struck by this new idea, she fixed on Petchorin eyes that expressed, at once, the anxiety of doubt and the desire of conviction. What eyes they were! they flashed lightning.

“ ‘Listen, Bela,’ he continued; ‘thou knowest how I love thee! I would give all on earth to see thee gay and happy. If thou remainest thus sad, I shall die. Tell me thou wilt be less sorrowful.’

“ Still pensive, she followed him with her eyes. At length her features assumed a smile—a kind of caressing expression, and she made with her head a sign of acquiescence. Petchorin had meanwhile taken her hand; becoming bolder, he coaxed her to bestow on him a kiss. She resisted faintly; nothing could be more graceful than her entreaties, expressed, as they were, in a foreign accent. She wept, she trembled.

“ ‘I am your captive—your slave,’ said she; ‘without doubt, you can use compulsion.’ And she wept anew.

“ Gregory Alexandrowitch struck his forehead violently, and rushed into the other room. I went to him. He was gloomy, and was walking up and down with his arms folded across his breast.

“ ‘Well,’ said I.

“‘She is a demon, and not a woman!’ he exclaimed. ‘But I won’t be conquered! I give you my word of honour!’

“I shook my head.

“‘Will you wager that before eight days?’ —

“I accepted the wager. He placed his hand in mine, and I left him.

“The very next day, he despatched a messenger to Kizliar to make several purchases. There were stuffs from Persia—one more beautiful than the others, of which I will spare you the catalogue.

“‘Maximus Maximitch,’ said Petchorin, showing me these stuffs, ‘do you believe that an Asiatic beauty can resist this species of attack?’

“‘You don’t know the Circassians,’ I answered; ‘they are totally different from the Georgians, and from the Tartar women beyond the Caucasus. You must not confuse one with the other. These have their own ways; they are differently brought up.’

“Petchorin smiled, and began to whistle a march.

“The result proved that I was right. The presents only partially effected what he had contemplated. Bela was less timid, more confiding; but that was all.

“Piqued by this resistance, he had recourse to a final measure. One morning, he ordered his horse, and entered her room ready armed, and dressed like a Circassian.

“‘Bela,’ said he, ‘when I resolved to carry you away, I did it in the hope that when you knew me, you would grant love for love. I have been deceived

in that hope! Farewell! I leave you all I possess. If you will return to your father, you are free to do so. I am guilty in your eyes; and will punish myself for that guilt. Adieu! I leave you. I have no aim, no purpose; but it matters not. Perhaps in exposing myself to balls and poignards, I may soon be rid of my existence. When I am no more, Bela, will you bestow on me one thought,—will you forgive me?’

“He held out his hand to her, and turned away his head.

“She remained silent and motionless as a statue. I was watching her through a crevice in the door. She was pale as death.

“Receiving no answer, Petchorin walked a few steps, as if going. He trembled. Look you, he was just the man to act up to the very letter of the engagement, that he had at first entered upon as a jest. The most unintelligible of characters! He was just at the door; all at once, she made a spring, threw her arms round his neck, and sobbed. Will you believe it, there were tears in my own eyes. When I say tears, I mean—in short, it was childishness.”

Here the Captain paused.

“I confess,” he continued, smoothing his moustachios, “I regretted no woman had ever loved me thus.”

“And did their happiness last?” I inquired of him.

“Yes, indeed! Bela allowed that, since she first saw Petchorin at her father’s house, she had often dreamed of him, and that no man had ever made so great an impression on her. Yes, they were happy!”

“What a disappointment!” I exclaimed, involuntarily. “I had been all along expecting a tragic ending! And the father, did he never learn that his daughter was at the fort?”

“I believe that he had some suspicions of the fact, but he had no opportunity to verify them. A few days afterwards, we heard that the old man had been killed. I will tell you how.”

My interest revived.

“Kazbitch—at least I imagine so—thought that Azamat had robbed him of his horse, with his father’s privity and consent. One day, therefore, he lay in wait for the old man, about three versts away from the village. The Prince was returning from a fruitless search after his daughter; his retainers were some distance in the rear. It was growing dark. He was riding pensively along at a slow pace; when suddenly Kazbitch sprung from a bush like a wild cat, leaped upon the saddle behind the old man, struck him to the earth by a blow with his dagger, then seized the bridle, and galloped away. Some of the Prince’s vassals, who had seen the whole proceeding from the hill, hastened in pursuit of him; but he had the start, and gained the mountain fastnesses.”

“His act procured him compensation and revenge at the same time,” said I to the officer, to draw forth his opinion.

“Without doubt,” replied he; “looking at the matter in the light they do themselves, he was perfectly right.”

This reflection struck me ; I could not help admiring the aptitude of the Russian for accommodating himself to the prejudices and customs of the people with whom he happens to come in contact. I am not certain that this aptitude is praiseworthy, but at any rate it proves the surprising flexibility of his nature, and a wholesome appreciation of the things which lead him to excuse evil, whenever it is the effect of necessity, and to accept it without a murmur when it is without remedy.

We had finished our tea, and our horses, that had been put to some time since, were impatiently pawing the snow-covered ground.

In the west, the moon was growing paler and paler, as if preparing to disappear behind the clouds, that hung upon the heights like the shreds of a torn curtain. We came out from the hut.

Contrary to the predictions of the Captain, the weather had cleared up, and gave promise of a fine morning. The stars seemed scattered in shapeless groups over the horizon, and vanished one after the other, as the pale gleam from the east extended itself over the azure of the firmament, lighting up the mountain summits, in their robes of eternal and virgin snow. On each side the eye plunged into mysterious and fathomless depths, with clouds of mist, rolling up and then unfolding themselves, looking like gigantic reptiles crawling into the abyss, through the fissures of the rock, as if wishing to hide themselves from the light of day.

This scene, in its rich magnificence, was impressed

with a religious stillness. Only at intervals a fresh breeze, wafted from the east, raised the frost-bespangled manes of our horses.

We set out. Five sorry hacks dragged our carriages with great difficulty up the winding path that leads to the Gout Gora.

We followed on foot, occasionally blocking the wheels with stones, to prevent the vehicle from rolling backwards down the slope, when the panting horses stopped to breathe.

It seemed as if this path led up to the sky, for as far as the eye could reach, it mounted uninterruptedly to the clouds; which, since yesterday eve, rested on the mountain crest, like vultures watching for their prey.

The snow crackled under our feet—the air was so rarefied that we could hardly breathe—at every instant the blood rushed violently to my head; yet an indescribable sensation of enjoyment circulated through my veins. I felt a sort of voluptuous pleasure, in seeing from this height the world, as it were, at my feet. This, I admit, was only a childish kind of joy; but man, in casting off the social fetters that bind his existence, to enable him to attain to a greater intimacy with nature, in defiance of his own will becomes again a child. Then the soul throws off all that is artificial, and aspires to restore itself to its originally pure condition, to which it will doubtless one day return. He who, like me, has wandered over desert mountains, has contemplated their marvellous forms under every aspect, and has inhaled the life-stirring air, wafted through

their rocky crevices, will understand without difficulty the longing desire that I feel to recall by language, pen, or pencil, these scenes of magical attraction.

On the summit of the Gout Gora we stopped to gaze around. A gray cloud, hanging suspended over the mountain, chilled us with its icy damp, and announced a coming storm; but the east was radiant with a hue so clear and golden, as to make us forget both the cloud and what it menaced.

I say *us*, for the Captain felt the fascination as powerfully as myself. I believe even that these grand and sublime scenes of nature produce on simple minds like his, a deeper and more vivid impression than they do on us, who are merely enthusiasts in words and on paper.

"You are accustomed to these magnificent scenes," I observed to him.

"Yes, as one gets accustomed to the whizzing of bullets, as one accustoms one's self to master the involuntary emotions of the heart."

"They say, however, that for the old soldier the music you mention has a charm."

"I admit it, but it is always because the heart beats quicker than usual. Look," said he, "towards the east—what a view!"

And in truth this panorama is unrivalled in beauty. Beneath us the valley of the Koitaour, with the Aragva and another river winding through it like two threads of silver; a bluish mist was creeping up its side; and on the right and left extended a line of jagged rocks, covered with snow and clusters of trees. The sun was

just beginning to appear from behind the mountain tops, which could scarce be distinguished from the vapours that covered them; and above the sun stretched a blood-red streak, which particularly arrested the attention of my companion.

"I told you," he exclaimed, "that we should have a storm to-day. We had better make haste, if we do not wish to be caught on the Krestovoï. Come, I say, all of you there, rouse, will you!" he called out to the drivers.

We locked the wheels for fear of accidents, and began to descend.

On our right extended a ravine; on our left there was a precipice so deep, that an Ossete village, in the bend of the valley appeared to us, like a swallow's nest.

I could not help shuddering at the thought, that in the dead of night, the crown courier passed over this same road ten times in the year, without descending from his frail vehicle.

One of our drivers was a Russian peasant from the environs of Jaroslavle; the other was an Ossete. The latter led the shaft horse by the bridle, after having taken the precaution to unyoke the others. As to our Russian, he had not troubled himself to get down from his seat.

I represented to him that a little more zeal would not be amiss, if it were only for the sake of my portmanteau, which I was not inclined to dive after in that gulf.

“Pooh!” he replied. “If it please God, we shall arrive safely, just the same as hundreds of others!”

He was right: we did arrive safely! It is true, that we might not have done so; but, nevertheless, we did.

This indifference, may it not be the supremacy of reason? After all, is life really worth so many cares and anxieties?

The reader will think, perhaps, that my reflections and my descriptions, are not worth the end of Bela's story. But first, I beg that he will bear in mind that I am not writing a novel, but simply the relation of a journey. It is not my fault if the Captain did not resume his narrative, at the very instant that the interest began to flag. A little patience, then; unless it be more agreeable to skip a few leaves, which I do not advise, for the reason that the Krestovoï, or, as the learned Gamba ridiculously calls it, Mount St. Christopher, is not unworthy of attention.

We continued to descend the slope of the Gout Gora into the Devil's valley.

You imagine, perhaps, by this romantic appellation, some site worthy of the spirit of darkness, surrounded by inaccessible rocks. Nothing of the sort.

“This is the Krestovoï,” said the Captain, as he descended into the valley, showing me a hill covered with snow, on the top of which rose a black cross of stone. Round this hill winds a path, that one perceives with difficulty, and that is only followed when the ordinary route is impeded by snows.

Our drivers observed to us that there was not the slightest trace of an avalanche; and to spare our horses, they took the circuitous path. At the commencement of the slope we met some Ossetes, who offered us their services, and who, with great shouting, set about pushing and steadying our carriages.

The way was really dangerous; on our right were suspended masses of snow, which, at the first gust of wind, threatened to roll into the ravine. The path was narrow and covered with snow, that gave way under our feet in some places, while in others it had been converted into ice by the alternate action of the sun and frosts, so that we advanced with the greatest difficulty.

The horses were slipping and falling about. Through the ravine which opened to our left, there rolled a torrent, which was sometimes covered with ice, and sometimes dashed and foamed over the dark-coloured rocks. We were two long hours winding up this path—half a league in two hours!

Suddenly the cloud burst into whirlwinds of snow and hail; the wind howled furiously through the clefts of the ravines, whistling like the robber Nightingale, of whom the tradition runs, that his whistle was audible from one end of Russia to the other. The cross soon disappeared in the mist, clouds of which, more and more dense and serried, kept advancing from the east. By the way, a tradition—strange and much accredited—will have it, that Peter the Great erected that cross when he advanced into the Caucasus. In the first

place, Peter never went beyond Daghestan; and moreover, an inscription, engraved in large letters, declares that it was raised in 1824, by order of Yermolof. The tradition, in spite of the evidence of the stone itself, is so general, that one is puzzled what to believe, particularly as the learned have made inscriptions say so many things!

We had yet a league and a quarter to get over—still down hill and a stony road, where we only quitted the slippery ice to sink into melting snow—before we could reach the station of Kobi. Our horses were jaded, ourselves benumbed. The fury of the hurricane continued to increase. It was a regular storm of our northern climate; except that its voice had a tone somewhat more sad and plaintive. “Spirit of the snow-storm!” I exclaimed, “thou weepest for thy native Steppe! There, at least, thou mayest unfold freely thine icy wings; but here thou lackest space, like the eagle who screams as he beats against the iron bars of his cage.”

“This is turning out badly,” said the Captain; “on all sides nothing is to be seen but mist and snow. We have the delightful alternative of a ravine or a snow-drift. If one fell into the ravine, one would not be certain of not going lower still, and the Baidara doesn’t appear to me in a very good condition to be forded. This is just like Asia! The rivers and the men are all alike—neither are to be depended on.”

Our drivers kept swearing and beating their horses, which nothing on earth could induce to move. At

length, one of these fellows said to the Captain: "Your honour doubtless sees that it will not be possible for us to get to Kobi to-day. If you would allow us to turn to the left, you may see there, on the hill-side, a black spot—probably some hut in which travellers, surprised by a storm, take shelter. These Ossetes engage to lead us there for a trifle to drink."

"Friend," replied the Captain, "I know well enough, without your telling me, that there is nothing those people will not do for drink-money."

"You must allow, however," said I, "that without them we might be still worse off."

"Pshaw! nonsense!" said the officer. "Nice guides they are, upon my word! They find themselves by instinct wherever there is anything to be gained."

We turned to the left, and after encountering obstacles of every kind, at length arrived at a miserable shelter, consisting of two huts, formed of chalk and pebbles, surrounded by a wall of the same materials.

The owners of these wretched habitations gave us a cordial welcome. I learned afterwards that government pays and supports them, on condition that they harbour distressed travellers.

"Everything is for the best," said I to the Captain, seating myself by the fire; "now you can resume the story of Bela, for I am sure it is not finished."

"And what makes you think so?" replied he, with a knowing look.

"Because nothing seems more likely. What had

so remarkable a beginning, must have a singular conclusion."

"Well, you are right."

"I am glad of it."

"Be glad of it if you will. For my own part, I cannot think of it without a sensation of painful regret. She was a lovely and interesting creature, that poor Bela! I had learned to love her like a child, and she showed great confidence and great affection towards me. I must tell you I have no family. It is twelve years since I have heard anything of my father and mother. As to marrying, I did not think of it till it was too late. Now, you see, it would scarcely suit my age. I was, therefore, delighted to have some one to spoil. Sometimes she would sing to us or dance the *Lesghien*. Such dancing! I have seen our fine ladies in the provinces. Once, even, I chanced to get into good society in Moscow. It's now about twenty years ago; but what a difference! It was quite another thing. Petchorin dressed her out like a doll; he thought of nothing but patting and caressing her; and she grew more and more lovely every day. Her face and hands lost their sunburnt hue, her cheeks bloomed like roses. Playful as a child, she was always practising some trick upon me. Heaven forgive the poor thing!"

"How did she bear the intelligence of her father's death?"

"We kept it from her for some time, wishing her first to become used to her new position. She knew it

at last, however; then she wept bitterly for some days, but love consoled her.

“During four months everything went on delightfully. I think I told you that Petchorin was passionately fond of hunting. Formerly he would plunge into the thickest of the forest after a boar or a fawn; but since Bela was with us he hardly went beyond the valley which the fort overlooks. One day, however, he appeared to me unusually pensive; he was walking up and down his room with a thoughtful air. Suddenly he went out to shoot without saying a word to any one, and remained away all the morning. This happened several times, at intervals less and less distant. A bad sign, I thought to myself. Some black cat has jumped between them!

“One day I entered their apartment. I could fancy myself there now, so distinctly can I recall everything. Bela was seated on a sofa, so pale and languid that I felt alarmed at her appearance. She was dressed in a black silk robe.

“‘Where is Petchorin?’ I asked.

“‘Hunting.’

“‘Did he go out to-day?’

“She was silent. It was painful for her to explain. ‘No,’ she said at length, ‘he did not come home yesterday.’ And she sighed deeply.

“‘Can anything have happened to him?’

“‘Yesterday,’ added she, weeping, ‘I imagined all the most dreadful accidents. A wild boar has wounded him, I said to myself, or some Tchetchenitz has led

him captive into the mountains ; but to-day I have only one thought—he loves me no more ! ’

“ ‘ To say the truth, my dear child, of all casualties, that would be the worst. ’

“ She began to weep anew ; then suddenly raising her head with a proud movement, she dried her tears.

“ ‘ If he does not love me, ’ she went on, ‘ why not send me back to my home ? Do I force him to keep me ? If this continues, I shall find means to leave him ! I am not his slave. My father was a prince ! ’

“ I tried to reason with her.

“ ‘ Listen, Bela, ’ I said ; ‘ he cannot remain all day, as if tied to the skirts of your dress. He is young, hunting amuses him ; but he will return. The surest way to send him away, is to fret thus. ’

“ ‘ ’Tis true ! ’tis true ! Well, I will be gay. ’ She took her tambourine, and began to sing, to dance, and frolic around me. But this fit did not last long. She threw herself on her couch, and covered her face with her hands.

“ What was I to do ? I never could get on with women. I racked my brain trying to find some means of consoling her. Nothing presented itself to my mind. For some time we remained opposite to each other, without speaking a word. I know nothing more tedious than such a situation. At length, it came into my head to ask her if she would not take a turn in the valley. It was a fine September day ; the air was mild, without being too warm, and the mountains stood out distinctly, as if they were ranged upon a platform.

“ We went out, then, and walked in silence, without straying far from the fort. At length she sat down upon the turf, and I placed myself beside her. It was laughable to witness. I watched over her like a nurse. The fort was built on an eminence, and from the ramparts the view was magnificent. On one side extended a vast meadow, diversified, however, by the broken nature of the ground. This terminated in a wood, which clothed the whole mountain slope, even to its summit. The smoke rose here and there from some villages, and from time to time a herd of horses passed before us. On the other side, flowed a little river, in which were mirrored the clusters of trees which crown these rocky heights, that stretch away, until they at length unite with the great Caucasian chain.

“ We were seated upon the angle of a bastion, contemplating this rich and varied landscape. Suddenly, a horseman debouched from the wood; he rode a gray horse—he stopped on the opposite bank of the river, about two hundred feet off.

“ There he began to make his horse turn and caper like one possessed.

“ ‘ Your eyes are younger than mine,’ said I to Bela; ‘ just look—what the devil is he about?’

“ ‘ It is Kazbitch,’ replied she.

“ ‘ Ah, the scoundrel! is it for us he’s playing off this farce?’

“ I soon recognised him myself, by his bistre-coloured face, and his tattered dress.

“ ‘It is my father’s horse!’ said Bela, with great emotion. She trembled like an aspen leaf, and her eyes flashed fire.

“ ‘Oh, oh!’ said I, ‘this little girl has also some of the mountain blood in her veins.’

“ ‘Come here,’ said I to the sentinel; ‘take your musket, and bring me down that varlet; you shall have a silver rouble, if you take good aim.’

“ ‘I’ll settle him, Commandant; but he wont stand still.’

“ ‘Well, tell him to be polite enough to do so.’

“ ‘Hark ye, friend!’ said the sentinel, making a sign to him with his hand; ‘stop a moment, you turn round upon yourself like a top.’

“ Upon this invitation, Kazbitch stopped a moment to listen. My grenadier takes aim, fires—‘Your servant, sir.’ The powder had not time to fall into the pan, when our man wheeled round; he drew himself up in the stirrups, sent us some compliments after his own peculiar style, and was off, threatening us with his whip.

“ ‘This is not to your honour,’ said I to the sentinel.

“ ‘Commandant, he will soon be killed; but with these people, one shot is not enough.’

“ A quarter of an hour afterwards, Petchorin came home from the chase. Bela threw herself into his arms without uttering a word of complaint—without addressing to him a single reproach. For my part, I was really angry with him.

“ ‘What are you thinking about?’ I said to him.

‘Do you know that Kazbitch was, a moment or two ago, on the opposite bank of the river, and that we fired at him? Is it not the most flagrant imprudence? these mountaineers are so vindictive. Do you think he does not suspect that you acted in concert with Azamat? I’ll wager he recognised Bela; it is scarcely a year since he was desperately in love with her: he told me so himself. If he could have scraped together sufficient money, he would certainly have married her.’

“Here Petchorin began to reflect.

“‘You are right; I must be more prudent. Bela, from this day, I forbid you to go into the valley.’

I had a long explanation with Petchorin. I saw, with pain, that he was no longer the same towards this poor child. Not satisfied with spending half his time in hunting, he treated her daily more and more coldly. Bela pined away visibly; her pretty features had an expression of suffering, and her beautiful eyes had no longer the same brightness.

“I sometimes would say to her: ‘Why do you sigh, Bela? You are sorrowful.’

“‘No.’

“‘Do you desire anything?’

“‘No.’

“‘Would you like to see your relations?’

“‘I have no relations.’

“For whole days, the only answer that could be elicited from her, was a ‘Yes,’ or a ‘No.’

“She made me unhappy. I spoke to Petchorin about her.

“ ‘Maximus Maximitch,’ he replied; ‘I have an unfortunate disposition; whether education has made it for me, or whether God created me thus, I know not. I only know, that if I am the cause of the misfortunes of others, I am not the happier for it myself. You will say that, for those I afflict, this is but a sorry consolation. But what’s to be done?—it is so. In my earliest youth, when scarcely freed from my guardians, I tasted madly of all the pleasures that fortune can procure; and, as you will easily believe, after excessive indulgence in these pleasures, came the disgust of them. Then I entered upon public life, and public life became to me a burden. I sought for amusement in love. I loved—I was loved; but this fluctuating sentiment only stimulated my imagination or my vanity. My heart remained empty—void—untouched. I took refuge in study; of which I tired, as of all the rest. I was not long in perceiving that science leads neither to fame nor to happiness, since the happiest people are the most ignorant; and fame, being the result of blind chance, proceeds more from intrigue than merit. Thus, I was disgusted with everything. By-and-by, I was sent to the Caucasus, and that was the happiest time of my life. I did hope, that one could hardly be weary among the bullets of the mountaineers—another illusion. At the end of a month, I had become so accustomed to the whizzing of the shot, that the musquittoes—I say it without exaggeration—troubled me the most; and I felt more bored than ever, seeing that this last resource failed me. The first time I saw Bela at her father’s,

and afterwards, when I pressed to my lips her dark tresses, I deceived myself so far as to believe that she was an angel sent to me by the compassionate mercy of Heaven—another deception. The love of a wild girl is scarce worth more than that of a fine lady; one wearies of the ignorance of the one, as of the coquetry of the other. It is not but I love her still; I owe to her some moments of delight, and I would give my life for her; but that does not prevent me from feeling weary of her. Is it folly? is it perverseness?—I know not. But I am decidedly as worthy of compassion as she is; perhaps more so. My nature has been spoiled by the breath of the world; with a fervid imagination, I have an insatiable heart. Nothing suffices for me; I could give myself up to sadness as easily as to pleasure; and, day by day, my life becomes devoid of interest. I have, however, one thing more to try—travelling, but not in Europe—Heaven keep me from it! but, as soon as may be, I will visit America, Arabia, India. Perhaps, I shall meet with death, by hoping for it. At least, I have reason to suppose that variety cannot immediately fail me; thanks to tempests, nocturnal attacks, and bad roads.’

“He continued for some time in this strain. His words have remained graven in my memory, for it was the first time I had heard such things from lips of five-and-twenty—Heaven grant that the first time may be the last! What a contrast! ‘Tell me,’ said the Captain, turning towards me; “tell me—you have been in the capital—are all our young men like that?”

I replied, that this style of language was, indeed, very usual, and that with some, at least, it was, I thought, sincere. Moreover, that this disenchantment of everything, like all fashions, had had its rise in the higher classes of society, and had descended afterwards to the others, among whom it had become so vulgarised, that those who suffer most acutely from this defect of their nature, conceal it as they would a crime."

The Captain did not comprehend these subtleties; he shook his head, and said, with his old, knowing smile: "And is it to the French that we owe the fashion of being wearied?"

"No; to the English."

"That does not astonish me; they have always been incorrigible drunkards."

This sally reminded me of a lady of Moscow, who maintained that Byron was simply a sot.

But the Captain's remark was excusable. In his resolution to abstain from wine, he had ended by persuading himself that all the evils of this world took their source from wine-drinking.

After this digression, he thus resumed the story of Bela:—

"We did not see any more of Kazbitch; nevertheless, I could not help thinking that he was manœuvring some dark vengeance. One day, Petchorin asked me to accompany him on one of his hunting expeditions. I sought to excuse myself as well as I could; but he ended, as usual, by persuading me to consent. We took with us an escort of five soldiers,

and set out very early. We scoured the woods and the marshes till ten o'clock, but started no game. 'Would it not be better,' said I, 'to return home? What can we do? this is evidently one of those unlucky sort of days.'

"Petchorin, careless alike of heat and fatigue, would not return with his pieces loaded. It was hopeless endeavouring to persuade him to give up his point, when once he had taken a thing into his head. Without doubt, in his childhood, his mother had humoured all his whims. At length, towards mid-day, we discovered a boar. We fired once—twice. Pshaw! it made for the reeds, and got clear off—in short, it was a day of ill luck. There was no help for it but to return home.

"We rode along in silence at a slow pace, and were but a short distance from the fort, which was hidden from our view by a copse—all at once we heard a shot fired. We looked at each other—we had both feared the same thing, at the same instant. We started off in the direction of the report. Some soldiers, who had hastened to join us, pointed out to us a horseman flying rapidly across the plain, and bearing some white object before him on his saddle-bow. Petchorin, who was as good a shot as any Tchetchenetz, slipped his gun from its case, and sped after him—I followed.

"Fortunately, thanks to the bad success of our sport, our horses were still fresh; they seemed to slide from beneath their saddles, and at each bound we gained upon the ravisher. At length I recognised Kazbitch,

but without being able to make out what he held before him.

“‘It’s Kazbitch!’ I called out, as I neared Petchorin. He nodded, and spurred forward. We were within gunshot of the mountaineer. Whether his horse was not so strong as ours, or whether it was fatigued by a double load, I know not, but he certainly made way with difficulty. I am sure that at this moment he remembered his own good steed. Still galloping forward, Petchorin had taken aim. ‘Do not fire,’ I exclaimed; ‘do not risk your shot, we are coming up with him.’ Oh, young people! all energy and fire, where they are not wanted.

“He fired, and hit one of the horse’s hind legs. The startled animal advanced about ten paces, and then sunk on his knees. Kazbitch leaped to the ground.

“Then we perceived that he held in his arms a woman, whose head was covered with a veil. It was Bela—poor Bela! He called out something in his own tongue, menacing her with his poignard. There was no time to lose. I fired in my turn, without daring to take aim. The ball must have struck his shoulder, for his arm fell to his side.

“When the smoke had cleared away, we perceived the wounded horse stretched on the ground, and near him lay Bela. As for Kazbitch, after having thrown away his gun, he clambered like a cat along the edge of a precipice. I had a great desire to dislodge him, but my gun was not loaded. We sprung from our horses, and ran to Bela.

“Poor young thing! she was lying extended without sense or movement, and the blood was fast bubbling forth from her wound. The mean scoundrel! had he struck her to the heart at once, he had been less cruel! she would have suffered less—but the back! Ah, it was indeed a brigand’s stroke!

“We tore off her veil to bind up the wound. Petchorin covered her cold lips with kisses—nothing could revive her.

“He remounted, and I succeeded in placing her upon his saddle. He put his arm round her waist, and we set off at a walking pace. ‘If we do not go faster,’ said Petchorin, ‘we shall never return with her alive.’

“‘True,’ I answered, and we went as fast as our horses could carry us.

“A crowd of people awaited us at the entrance of the fort. We carried the dying girl to Petchorin’s quarters, with all possible care, and sent for the doctor. Although intoxicated, he came immediately, and after having examined the wound, declared she had not four and twenty hours to live; but he was wrong.”

“She recovered?” I asked of the Captain, taking hold of his hands in the excess of my joy.

“No,” replied the officer, accustomed to military precision; “but instead of four and twenty hours, she died two days after.”

“And how had Kazbitch contrived to carry her off?”

“In this way: notwithstanding Petchorin had for-

bidden it, she had left the fort to walk by the side of the little river. It was a warm day, she had rested herself on a rock, and was bathing her feet in the stream. Kazbitch, who lay in ambush, rushed on her, gagged her mouth, and carried her into the copse. He held his prey, and he had his horse ready; with these, a Circassian is never at a loss.

“However, she had managed to cry out; the sentinels gave the alarm, and fired at him, but missed their aim—just then we came up.”

“But why did Kazbitch wish to carry her off?”

“How do you mean—Why? Because these mountaineers are always doing these sort of things. They are the very personification of brigandage. If a thing is useless to them, no matter; they take it for the pleasure of robbing; such is the fact. Besides, this man had been in love with Bela.”

“So Bela died?”

“Two days after—poor child! how she suffered! We suffered too, and plentifully!

“At about ten at night she came to her senses. We were seated near her bed-side.

“She had scarcely opened her eyes, when she asked for Petchorin.

“‘I am here near thee, my *djanetchka*!’—that would be, in Russ, ‘My soul! my best beloved!’ and he took her hand.

“‘I am dying!’ she said to him.

“We tried to comfort her—told her the surgeon had promised to bring her round.

“She shook her head, and turned her face towards the wall—poor child! she did not wish to die.

“In the night she was delirious; her head burned, and every now and then, feverish shiverings agitated her frame.

“She spoke incoherently of her father, her brother; she longed for her own home, her dear mountains. Then she turned to Petchorin, and called him by a thousand caressing names—or else she would ask him why he loved her no longer.

“He listened in silence: leaning his head on his hand—but I did not see a single tear moisten his eyelashes. Perhaps it is not in his nature to weep, or he has sufficient strength to control his feelings. For myself, I had never been so deeply, nor so painfully moved.

“Towards morning the delirium ceased. For nearly an hour she remained motionless. She was pale as death, and so weak that one could hardly be certain that she breathed. Then for a few moments she was better, and she began to speak. You imagine of what? Those thoughts only come to the dying. She regretted that she was not a Christian, because in the next world her soul would not be with that of Petchorin, and that in heaven another would be his companion. The idea came into my mind to christen her before she closed her eyes. I proposed it to her. She looked at me some time as if perplexed, and without being able to utter a word. At length, she replied that she would die in the faith of her fathers.

“ Oh, how she was changed already ! Her cheeks were pale and hollow, her eyes seemed immeasurably large, and her lips were parched. She complained of an internal sensation of burning heat, as though a red-hot iron had entered her breast.

“ The second night approached ; we did not take our eyes off her. She suffered dreadfully, but she no sooner felt the least relief than she tried to persuade Petchorin she was better. She kissed his hand, which she held constantly in her own.

“ Towards morning she began to feel that feverish anguish which announces death. She tossed from side to side, tore off her bandages, and the blood began to flow afresh. When we had dressed her wounds anew, she became calm for a moment, and asked Petchorin to kiss her.

“ He was kneeling by her bedside ; he gently raised the head of the young girl with the pillow, and pressed his lips to her mouth, which was already cold. With her trembling hands she clasped convulsively the neck of her lover, as if to leave him her whole soul in this last embrace. Look you ! she could not have done better than to die. Petchorin would have left her sooner or later, and the stab of the poignard was the better of the two.

“ All the morning of the next day she remained silent, and docile as an angel, under the prescriptions of the doctor, who spared neither fomentations nor potions. ‘ For mercy’s sake,’ I said to him, ‘ what’s the use of all these remedies ? Have you not declared yourself that she cannot live ? ’

“ ‘No matter, Maximus Maximitch ; we must do our work conscientiously.’

“ What think you of that, for a conscience ?

“ In the afternoon she complained of a burning thirst. We opened the windows, but the air without was more stifling than that of the room. We placed ice near her bed ; nothing was of any use. I knew that this thirst was the forerunner of death, and said so to Petchorin.

“ ‘Water ! water !’ she cried, with a hoarse voice, raising herself on her couch.

“ He turned pale as a sheet, filled her a glass, and presented it to her.

“ For my part, I hid my face in my hands, that I might not witness this spectacle ; and I recited, I know not what prayer. Look you, now, I have often seen people die in hospitals and on the field of battle—but no !—oh, no !—it was nothing to be compared to this.

“ And then, I must confess it, one thing was very painful to me. In the face of death she never once remembered me—I, who had loved her as a father ! If she had only said to me, ‘ Adieu, my old Maximus Maximitch !’ I think I could have died with her. But, heaven forgive her ! And indeed, what am I, that she should think of me in that solemn moment ?

“ After having drank, she felt relieved ; but in a few moments she expired.

“ We put a glass to her lips—there was not the faintest breath. I led Petchorin from the room. We walked for some time in the valley, side by side, without

speaking. His face did not betray any particular emotion. I felt ashamed of him. In his place I should have died of grief.

“At length he sat down, and began to trace with his cane I know not what kind of figures on the sand. I thought the circumstance required some words of consolation ; he raised his head and smiled.

“This smile had upon me the effect of the sudden touch of an icicle. I went away to order the coffin. These last offices partially diverted me from my grief. I took a melancholy pleasure in ornamenting her coffin with all that I could find that was most precious.

“The next morning, we buried her behind the fort, not far from the river, and near the same spot where she had rested herself for the last time. Around this narrow tomb, clusters of acacias and elders have grown up since. I had a great wish to erect a cross over it, but I was deterred by the thought that she was not a Christian.”

“And Petchorin ?” I inquired.

“His health suffered,—he grew thin and pale ; but I never spoke to him of Bela. I feared to annoy him. What could I think ? Three months afterwards, he entered another corps, and went to Georgia. Since that time we have not seen each other, but I think I heard some little while ago that he had returned to Russia, but without being in active service. The fact is, news of one’s friends reaches us here very seldom.”

Here the Captain entered into a long dissertation to prove how disagreeable it was to wait a whole year

for the answer to a letter. I was not deceived by this. I saw he sought to divert the course of bitter reflections and remembrances. I did not interrupt him, and I did not listen to him. An hour afterwards, all was ready for our departure. The hurricane was calmed, the sky was again serene ; and we set out.

On the road, I could not help returning to the subject of Bela and Petchorin.

“And have you learned nothing of Kazbitch?” I asked.

“No faith, nothing! I have heard, though, that a certain Kazbitch—a desperate sort of fellow—bothers the left flank of our corps. He wears a red *beschmeet*, and dips under our bullets with wonderful adroitness, whenever he hears them whiz. That may be him.”

At Kobi we parted. I took post-horses. The Captain could not follow me on account of his baggage. It did not seem likely we should ever meet again ; but we did meet. It lies with you to learn how.

Meanwhile, grant that his was at least a good and estimable nature.

MAXIMUS MAXIMITCH.

AFTER having parted from Maximus Maximitch, I hastened to cross the ravines of the Terek and the Darial. I had breakfasted at Kazbek, and taken tea at Lars; and arrived in time to dine at Vladikavkaz. I will spare you the descriptions of the mountains—of the echoes that repeat nothing—of the views which present nought interesting, particularly for those who do not know the country; and still more willingly do I abstain from statistical details, for which no one cares. I stopped at an inn, the usual halting-place with all travellers, where it is impossible to obtain even a pheasant,—nay, a mess of pottage,—because the three invalids who keep it, are either too stupid, or too drunken, to comprehend the most trifling request.

I was told that I should not be able to proceed any further for three days, and that I must wait for an “occasion” to go to Iekaterinograd. I had no other resource in the meantime, except to write the anecdote of Bela; and this I did, without suspecting that it would form the first link in a chain of romances. This shows how the most trifling circumstances may be productive of the most serious consequences. But I

perceive I am forgetting to tell you what an "occasion" is. It is, then, nothing more nor less than a detachment of infantry with a single cannon, which escorts every convoy going from Vladikavkaz to Iekaterinograd.

I was wearied to death the first day. On the morning of the second, I saw a chariot enter the inn-yard. Maximus Maximitch! We greeted each other like old acquaintances, and I placed my room at his disposal. He did not require the offer to be made twice; he tapped me familiarly on the shoulder, accompanying this action with a grimace, that might have passed for a smile. What an original! Maximus Maximitch was profoundly versed in the culinary art. None knew better than he how to roast a pheasant, or basted it better with brine of cucumber; in short, I feel it my duty to confess, that without him I should have fared but badly. A bottle of generous wine helped me to forget the simplicity of our bill of fare, which consisted of one solitary dish. After having smoked our pipes together, we sat down; I near the window, and he near the stove, for the weather was cold and damp. We were silent. What had we to say?

He had already related to me what he knew worthy of being told; and for myself, I had not the smallest anecdote wherewith to wile away an idle hour. I looked out of the window. A multitude of small, low houses, scattered over the banks of the Terek, which widens as it flows onwards, were to be seen amid clusters of trees; beyond them rose the jagged ridges

of the mountains ; and again, behind these the Kazbek, surmounted by its cardinal's hat. I mentally bade adieu to all these things, and in doing so experienced a sentiment of regret. We remained sometime thus engaged. The sun disappeared behind the snowy crests ; a white mist was floating in the distance ; when the sound of a little post-bell resounded through the streets, mingling with the cries of the conductors. Some chariots, accompanied by a troupe of Armenians of a more than usually neglected exterior, entered the inn-yard, followed by a light and apparently empty travelling carriage. The graceful appearance of this equipage, and the careful workmanship displayed in its construction, bore a decidedly foreign stamp. Behind the carriage walked a man with moustachios, habited in a Polish frock-coat, and rather superior-looking for a servant. From the dexterity with which he emptied a pipe, and the style in which he addressed the conductor, it was easy to make a good guess as to his condition in life. He was to all appearance the spoiled valet of an indolent master ; in fact, a sort of Russian Figaro.

"My good fellow," I said from the window, "what is that coming this way ; is it the 'occasion'?"

He cast rather an impertinent look towards me, and arranged his cravat. An Armenian who was standing near him, smiled ; and answered in his stead, that it was indeed the "occasion," and that the convoy would start the next morning.

"Heaven be praised," said Maximus Maximitch,

who had just approached the window. "What a singular carriage!" he added. "I dare say it's some great man going to Tiflis. He probably is not well acquainted with our mountains. They'll settle his carriage for him. But who can he be? Let's see!"

We went into the passage. Towards the further end we saw an open door, and a valet and a coachman carrying trunks and portmanteaus into the room.

"I say, my good friend," exclaimed the Captain to the servant, "to whom does this carriage belong? It's a deuced nice one!"

The valet, without answering, muttered something to himself, and went on with his work. Maximus Maximitch grew angry, and striking the ill-mannered varlet on the shoulder, said to him:—

"I ask ——"

"Whose is that carriage?" interrupted the valet. "It is my master's."

"And who is your master?"

"Petchorin!"

"How! What do you say? Petchorin! Good Heavens! Has he not served in the Caucasus?"

Maximus Maximitch pulled me by the sleeve; his eyes sparkled with joy.

"I believe so," replied the valet. "I have not been long with him."

"It must be him! Gregory Alexandrowitch—that's his name, is it not? I have been very intimate with your master," continued he, tapping the valet's

shoulder in a friendly manner, but sufficiently hard to make him stagger.

“Excuse me, sir; but you prevent me from doing something that is of importance,” grumbled out the man.

“Oh! indeed,” continued the Captain; “you don’t know that your master was very intimate with me. We lived together—but whereabouts is he?”

The servant informed him that his master had dined, and intended to pass the night, with Colonel N——.

“Won’t he come here this evening?—or, are you not going to him? In the latter case, do not forget to tell him that Maximus Maximitch is here. That will be sufficient. I will give you enough for a glass of something to drink.”

The valet put on a disdainful look at the mention of so poor a remuneration; however, he promised to deliver the message.

“He is coming here!” said Maximus Maximitch, in ecstasy, to me. “I intend to wait for him at the door. I am in despair at not knowing Colonel N——.”

He seated himself on a bench before the door, and I returned to my room. I confess that I felt curious to see this Petchorin. Although the Captain’s story had not given me a very favourable impression of him, I yet thought there were some traits in his character rather out of the common way.

In about an hour an invalid brought in the kettle and a tea-pot.

“Will you have some tea?” I called out to Maximus Maximitch.

“No, thank you—I do not wish for any.”

“And why? It’s late, and the air is cold.”

“Thank you very much—but no.”

“As you please.”

I took my tea alone. In about ten minutes the Captain entered the room.

“You are right,” said he; “it will be better to take something warm. I was expecting—the servant has been gone some time—something must have detained him.”

He drank off one cup of tea, refused to take a second, and returned to watch, in the greatest agitation imaginable.

Petchorin’s indifference evidently vexed him, and the more so that he had spoken to me of their intimacy. An hour before, he had felt certain that if Petchorin had known he was there he would have hastened to meet him.

It was late, and very dark; I opened the window and called out to Maximus Maximitch that it was time to retire to rest. I heard him mutter something between his teeth. I renewed my invitation, but could obtain no answer.

I stretched myself on the divan, and threw my cloak over me. I left a lighted candle on the *lejanka*, and soon fell asleep. I think I should have passed a very comfortable night, if I had not been disturbed at a late hour by Maximus Maximitch. He threw his pipe upon the table, walked up and down the room, looked at the fire, and ended by getting into bed. For a considerable time I heard him coughing and tossing about.

“Are you troubled with fleas in your bed?” I asked.

“Ah, indeed,” he replied, and sighed deeply.

The next morning I arose early, but Maximus Maximitch was beforehand with me. He was already seated on his bench at the door.

“I must go to the Commandant,” said he; “if Petchorin should happen to come, pray send for me.”

I promised him this, and he strode off. He seemed to have recovered all the vigour and agility of his younger days.

It was a fresh and brilliant morning; golden clouds floated over the mountains, forming as it were an aerial chain. In front of our door was a spacious square. It was Sunday, and the bazaar was crowded with people: young barefooted Ossetes, carrying on their shoulders baskets filled with honey in the comb, kept running round and round after their customers. But this view had no longer any interest for me; I was beginning to share the impatience of the Captain.

Ten minutes had scarcely passed when I saw the individual we were waiting for, at the other end of the square. He was with Colonel N——, who after accompanying him to the inn door, bade him farewell, and re-entered the fort. I sent off immediately for Maximus Maximitch. Petchorin’s valet hastened to meet his master, and informed him that the carriage was nearly ready; he then handed him a box of cigars, and set about preparing for their departure with considerable zeal.

Petchorin smoked a cigar, yawned twice, and sat down on the other side of the doorway. This is the best time to sketch his portrait.

He was of a middling height, graceful, and perfectly proportioned; his broad chest indicated a vigorous constitution, capable of withstanding the effects of a wandering life, and the changes of climate, as well as the dissipation of a capital, or the excesses of the passions; his greatcoat of light gray buttoned only at the waist, and allowed one to contemplate linen of dazzling whiteness. His closely-fitting gloves seemed to have been made upon the model of his aristocratic hands; and when he removed one of them, I was struck with the exquisite delicacy of his fingers. His step displayed an air of careless indolence; but I remarked that he walked without swinging his arms, a certain indication of a reserved disposition. These remarks, however, are to be taken merely as the result of my own impressions. I have no desire to pass them off as infallible. When he seated himself on the bench, his upright figure bent as though it were boneless; his attitude indicated a species of nervous debility. He reclined there like a coquette of thirty upon a down cushion, after the fatigues of a ball. At first sight, I should not have pronounced him more than three-and-twenty; but on a closer examination, I would have gone as far as thirty. His smile had a childlike expression, and his complexion was delicate as a woman's. His fair hair curled naturally, gracefully shading a noble and pale forehead, on which scarcely the faintest network of wrinkles could

be traced ; these, however, probably deepened when he was excited by anger or any other passion. Although his hair was very light, his moustachios and eye-brows were dark ; this is a sign of good breed in men, as is a dark mane and tail in a white horse. To complete his picture, I will add, that his nose was inclined to turn upwards, and that his teeth were irreproachably white. As to his eyes, they require a little further description. In the first place, when his mouth smiled, his eyes expressed no sympathetic accompaniment. Have you never remarked this peculiarity in certain individuals ? It is the sign either of a perverse nature, or of some deep and incurable sorrow. They shone with a phosphorescent light, as it were, from beneath their half-closed lids. This expression was neither the reflection of inward warmth, nor that of an excited imagination ; it was the brightness of polished steel—vivacity without ardour.¹ His glance, which was wandering, was nevertheless grave and penetrating, producing the effect of an indiscreet question ; it would have been positively importunate, had it not likewise expressed tranquillity and indifference. Perhaps the above remarks have only suggested themselves to me, because I knew something of his life ; and it is possible that he might have produced a totally different impression on any other person. But as the reader will never hear of my hero, except through me, his best plan will be to make up his mind to see with my eyes. I must say, however, that, take

¹ The eye of a Jesuit.—TRANS.

him all in all, he was an agreeable man, with one of those faces which generally please, especially women.

The horses were already to; the little bell suspended to the yoke had rung more than once. Twice had the servant announced to Petchorin that all was ready, and Maximus Maximitch was not yet in sight. Fortunately, Petchorin was plunged in one of his reveries. He was contemplating the jagged summits of the Caucasus, and appeared in no hurry to set out. I approached him; "If you will wait a few moments," I said, "you will have the pleasure of seeing an old friend."

"Ah, true!" he replied quickly, "they told me that yesterday—but, where is he?"

I cast a look round the square, and saw Maximus Maximitch running towards us with all his might. A few minutes and he had joined us, quite out of breath; the perspiration dropping from his forehead, the moistened locks of his gray hair escaping from beneath his *chapka* and sticking to his face; his knees trembled. He was going to throw himself upon Petchorin's neck, but the latter with an air of coldness, softened, however, by an affable smile, held out his hand. The Captain stood motionless, but soon clasped Petchorin's hand with both his own, without being able to utter a word.

"How delighted I am to see you, my dear Maximus Maximitch! how are you?"

"And thou—and you?" faltered the old officer.

“How many years—how many days! but where are you going?”

“To Persia—and further still.”

“What, directly? It is so long since we have seen each other!”

“I am pressed for time, Maximus Maximitch.”

“Gracious heavens! but why such haste? I have so many things to tell you—so many things to ask you. Have you retired from the service?”

“I got sick of it!” replied Petchorin, smiling.

“Do you remember our life in the fort? What a country that was for hunting; you were terribly fond of it! and Bela!—”

A slight paleness spread itself over Petchorin’s features—he turned away his head.

“I remember all that,” he said, with a forced yawn.

Maximus Maximitch begged of him to delay his departure for two hours.

“We shall have an excellent dinner,” said he. “I have got two pheasants, and one can get capital wine here of Cakhetia—not, it is true, equal to that of Georgia, but nevertheless of irreproachable quality. We will chat together—you will tell me what you have been doing in St. Petersburg!”

“But I have nothing in the least interesting to tell you, my dear Maximus Maximitch—therefore, good-bye. I am in a hurry. I thank you for not having forgotten me,” added he, taking the Captain’s hand.

The old officer knit his brows; he sought in vain to hide his displeasure.

“Forgotten!” replied he. “I—oh, no—I have forgotten nothing! After all, God bless you! I scarcely expected such a reception.”

“Come, come!” said Petchorin, pressing him amicably in his arms; “am I not always the same? What would you have? Every one must pursue his own way. Heaven knows whether we shall ever meet again.”

As he said these words, he seated himself in the carriage, and already the coachman had seized the reins.

“Stop! Stop!” cried Maximus Maximitch, laying hold of the door. “I forgot: I have some papers, Gregory Alexandrowitch; I carry them about with me everywhere. I had hoped to join you in Georgia, and Heaven decided that it should be here. What shall I do with them?”

“Anything you like,” replied Petchorin. “Adieu!”

“So you are going to Persia. Will it be for long?”

The carriage was already on its way, and Petchorin only answered by a wave of the hand, which could have been thus interpreted: “You are angry—you have really no cause!”

The noise of the wheels, and the tinkle of the post-bell, had long ceased to be heard; yet the poor Captain still stood motionless, and absorbed in meditation.

“And yet,” said he at length, trying to look indifferent, although more than one tear moistened his eyelids, “we once were friends! But what is friend-

ship now? What interest can he take in aught that concerns me? I am neither rich enough, nor of sufficiently high rank: besides, our ages do not suit. His second residence in the capital has made a coxcomb of him. What a calash! What a quantity of baggage! and his valet—what an impertinent fellow!” He accompanied these last remarks by a smile of irony.

“By the way, what do you think of him?” said he, turning towards me. “What do you say to that whim of going to Persia? It’s absurd, upon my word; most absurd! However, it is not merely from to-day that I have learned to think him a hair-brained fellow, on whom one could not depend. Yet I see with pain that he will turn out badly; there’s no doubt about it. I have always thought that the man who can forget old friends, can have nothing solid in him—no sterling worth.”

With these words, he turned away to hide his emotion; and hastening to his carriage, pretended to examine the wheels, although his eyes were filled with tears.

“Maximus Maximitch,” said I, advancing towards him, “what are those papers that Petchorin left you?”

“God knows! probably a journal—some memoirs.”

“And what do you intend doing with them?”

“Turning them into cartridges.”

“You had better give them to me.”

He looked at me with some surprise, muttered something between his teeth, and began to rummage in a

portmanteau. He drew out a manuscript book, which he threw down with a look of contempt; a second—a third—a tenth—had the same fate. There was something so childish in his anger, that although I pitied him, I could not refrain from laughing.

“That’s all,” he said; “I congratulate you upon your good luck.”

“And you permit me to dispose of them as I like?”

“Even to publish them in the newspapers! What is it to me? Am I his friend—his relation? It is true that we lived a long time together under the same roof; but after all, I have lived with many others!”

I hastened to take possession of the papers, and carried them off at once, for fear that the Captain might change his mind. Just then it was announced to us that the convoy would start in an hour. I ordered my carriage to be got in readiness. The Captain entered the room just as I was putting on my *chapka*. He did not appear prepared to set out, and there was a coldness of manner about him which was unusual.

“Do you not come with me, my good Maximus Maximitch?”

“No!”

“Why not?”

“I have not yet seen the Commandant, and I have some government papers to deliver to him.”

“But you have been to him——.”

“I know, but he was out; and I did not like to wait.”

I comprehended all ; the honest man had—for the first time in his life, perhaps—sacrificed official duty to a personal consideration. And how had he been rewarded ?

“ I very much regret, Maximus Maximitch, that we are obliged to part.”

“ Pshaw ! it does not do for old men like myself, who are not up to the mark in the ideas of modern times, to herd with you and your set. The young men of the present day are worldly-minded, and too proud. It all goes on pretty well, as long as you are among the bullets of the mountaineers ; but afterwards, when you return, it’s as much as ever you will condescend to, to give one a shake of the hand.”

“ Maximus Maximitch, I have done nothing to deserve this reproach.”

“ It is only to explain to you——. However, I wish you every happiness, and an agreeable journey.”

We parted rather coldly. The excellent Maximus Maximitch became the most obstinate and least-accommodating of captains ; and all because Petchorin, through absence of mind, or no matter what other motive, had contented himself with putting out his hand, when the other wanted to throw his arms round his friend’s neck. It is distressing to see a young man renounce his dearest hopes, his most cherished illusions, when he sees shivered before him, the prism that showed him, in such an attractive light, the actions and sentiments of mankind ; but he has the power to repair his errors, and to enjoy new deceptions. But at

the age of Maximus Maximitch, what has one left? However large the heart, it hardens at last, and the soul becomes insensible.

I set out alone.

I have learned not long since, that Petchorin died on his return from Persia. I confess that this information, which leaves me at liberty to publish his manuscripts, caused me a selfish satisfaction. I have profited by this opportunity to attach my name to a stranger's production. Heaven grant that my readers may not treat me too severely for a fault which is too common to deserve very serious reproaches.

There still remains due some explanation as to the motives that have induced me to reveal to the public gaze, the private sentiments of a man who was a stranger to me. It would be of no moment had I been his friend; the liberties assumed by pretended friendship are but too well known. But I never chanced to see him but once, and that was on the high road; therefore, I cannot be suspected of having cherished against him that smothered hatred, which, under the mask of kindness, waits but for the death or the misfortunes of a friend to load him with reproaches, counsels, sarcasms, or pity.

By reading these memoirs attentively, I convinced myself of the sincerity of the man, who exposed with so little reserve his own follies and his own vices. The history of a human heart, even though that heart were

but of the most ordinary stuff, is more interesting, and more useful, than the history of a people ; particularly when it is drawn up by a matured understanding, that has dived deeply and conscientiously into the mysteries of its own nature, and is written without any view to excite interest or admiration. One of Rousseau's greatest errors, was the reading of his "Confessions" to his friends.

For myself, in publishing some extracts from this journal, I have no intention but that of being useful. Although I have been careful to change all proper names, it is probable that the personages may recognize themselves ; and perhaps they may be indulgent for the faults of a man who has nothing more to do with this world, and whom they have judged till now with some degree of severity. We almost always excuse what we can thoroughly understand.

I have limited myself to borrowing from Petchorin's memoirs, only what relates to his sojourn in the Caucasus. I have, besides, in my possession a thick book, in which he has written the history of his whole life. I intend some day to publish it ; for the present moment, powerful motives deter me from taking this step.

Some of my readers will perhaps be curious to know what I think of the character of Petchorin ; the title of this work is my reply. But, it will be said, this is irony. Who can tell ?

TAMAN.

OF all the maritime towns of Russia, Taman is decidedly the most disagreeable. I had a narrow escape of dying of hunger in that nest of hovels; and what is if possible worse, I was within an inch of being drowned there. I arrived there late. The conductor pulled up the three horses of my *telega* in the court of an isolated house, the only stone one in the place, and which stands just at the entrance of the town. The sentry, a Cossack of the Black Sea, hearing the little bell of my carriage, called out in a loud voice, which betrayed his recent indulgence in a nap, "Who goes there?"

The inspector and a serjeant came out.

I explained to these gentlemen that I was an officer; and that, being employed on active crown service, I had a right to a lodging. The serjeant led us all over the town. Every house at which we stopped, we were told was full. The weather was cold; I had not closed my eyes for three nights, and fatigue had put me out of temper.

"Lead me somewhere," I said to him; "even if

it be to the devil, provided I can but find a lodging—a shelter.”

“There is a hut,” he replied, scratching his ear; “only I don’t think it will suit your grace on account of the dirt.” Without analysing this piece of information, I ordered him to lead me thither. After passing through several muddy alleys, divided by miserable enclosures, we arrived at the hut in question, situated on the sea-shore.

The full moon was shining on the thatched roof and white walls of my new dwelling. In the yard, which was enclosed by a flint wall, was a second hut, still smaller and more dilapidated than the other. The shore descended abruptly to the sea, which washed the lower part of this wretched habitation, whence one heard but too distinctly the eternal moaning of the waves.

The moon looked down peacefully on the agitated, but to her submissive, element; and by her rays I distinguished in the distance two vessels, whose dark rigging traced itself like a vast cobweb against the pale blue sky. There are vessels in the harbour, I thought to myself; to-morrow I shall be able to set off for Ghelentchik.

A Cossack of the line performed for me the functions of a valet. I ordered him to take down my port-manteau, and to send away the coachman. I then set about calling the master of the hut—no answer. I knocked—still no answer. At length, I saw coming towards the door a boy of about fourteen.

“Where’s the master?”

“There is none!”

“What! no master?”

“No.”

“And the mistress?”

“She is gone to the village.”

“Who, then, will open the door?” said I, kicking against it with my foot.

The door opened of itself, and a sensation of dampness almost startled me. I lighted a lucifer match, and held it beneath the boy’s nose. This light showed me two eyes entirely white. He was blind! totally blind from his birth. He stood upright and motionless before me, and I set about examining his features.

I confess that I have an intense physical dislike to the blind, the squint-eyed, the deaf, the dumb, the maimed, the halt, the hump-backed, etc. I have always remarked a connection between the exterior of an individual and his inward soul, as if the moral nature were affected by any physical imperfection, and were incomplete in relative proportion.

I examined, then, the face of the blind youth; but what can one read in features where the sight is wanting? I considered him for some time with a sensation of pity; when suddenly, an almost imperceptible smile moved his thin lips, and produced in me, I know not why, a kind of feeling of annoyance. I conceived the idea that the pretended blind youth could see. It was in vain I repeated to myself that none could simulate the outward signs of blindness; and besides, what

single word. In the evening she was thoughtful—this morning, at the spring, more thoughtful still. At the moment I accosted her she was listening, with an absent air, to Grouchnitzky, who was exerting himself in making up phrases about the beauties of nature. She had no sooner perceived me than she was seized with a fit of laughter, all the time pretending not to be aware that I was present. This was seriously imprudent. I went away to observe them from a distance and unseen: I saw her twice turn away and yawn. Decidedly Grouchnitzky loves her. In two days more she will not even speak to him.

June 13.—I often ask myself why I so obstinately endeavour to win the love of a young girl that I do not mean to seduce, and will never marry. Why this womanish coquetry? Vera loves me better than ever Mary will. If I fancied it were almost impossible to triumph over her coldness or her virtue, the difficulty might stimulate my self-love.

But it is nothing of the sort. It is not, as may well be believed, that wild wish to love, which is our torment in our earlier years, which makes us fly from one woman to another until we find one who cannot bear us; from that moment dates our constancy—our passion is true, infinite, like a mathematical line which departs from a point and plunges into space. The secret of this infinitude consists in the impossibility of arriving at a goal,—that is to say, at an end.

Wherefore, then, do I give myself all this trouble?

Is it from hatred towards Grouchnitzky. The poor fellow is not worth noticing. It is a consequence of that bad, but invincible, sentiment that induces us to blight the dearest illusions of our neighbour, to have the satisfaction of saying to him, when he shall ask us, in accents of despair, in what he may henceforth trust,

“My dear friend, that has happened to me as well as to you; and yet, you see, I dine, sup, and sleep in the most comfortable way possible. I can die without fear, and without shedding a tear.”

But there is an incomparable charm in reigning over a heart that is yet new to the world! It is like a flower, of which the sweetest perfume awaits but the first ray of sunlight to exhale itself. At that moment it must be gathered; and then, after one has feasted to satiety on its sweet emanations, it may be thrown aside on the highway, for the first passer-by to pick up.

I feel within me that insatiable thirst which covets all that presents itself before me. I see the joy, the suffering of others, only as they can be brought to bear upon myself, and as an aliment which nourishes the strength of my soul. For myself, beneath the empire of the passions, I am less likely to err than another. My ambition has been restrained, as it were, by circumstances, but it has manifested itself in another manner; for ambition is but the thirst of command, and my greatest joy is to see all that surrounds me bend to my will—to be myself an object of devoted affection, love, and fear. Is that not the first proof, and, at the same time, the greatest triumph, of dominion? And is

happiness aught but the satisfaction of pride? If I thought myself better or more powerful than the rest of mankind, I should esteem myself happy; if every one loved me, I should find within me an inexhaustible source of love. Evil engenders evil—the first grief gives the idea of the pleasure one feels in torturing one's fellow-creature; the idea of evil cannot enter the mind of man, without awakening, at the same time, the desire of doing evil. Ideas, as some moralist has said, are but organic conditions; they take form at their birth, and this form is an act. He who has most ideas acts most; that is why a genius, chained to administrative occupations, would die or go mad. The same as a man endowed with a vigorous organisation, condemned to a sedentary life, and who eats and drinks to excess, would be carried off by a fit of apoplexy.

The passions are only ideas in their first stage of development. They are an attribute of the youthful heart. He who believes in their indefinite empire is grossly deceived! How many peaceful rivers take their source from roaring cataracts? There is not one which holds on an impetuous and turbulent course until it reaches the sea. But this calm is often the indication of gigantic, although hidden powers. The fulness and depth of thought and feeling admit no wild and passionate outbreak; the soul, in grief as in joy, reckons severely with itself, and acknowledges that it should be thus; it knows that, without storms, the burning power of the sun would sooner or later parch up its existence: it examines the phases of its being;

applauds or upbraids itself with the feeling of a parent. It is only when man has arrived at the perfect knowledge of himself, that he can appreciate the justice of his God. In glancing over these latter pages, I see that I have wandered far from my subject. What matters it? I write these memoirs for myself alone. All that I may happen to note down in them, will recall to me at some future period an interesting remembrance.

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Grouchnitzky came to see me, and threw his arms round my neck. He had just been made an officer. We drank some champagne together. A little while after, Dr. Werner came in.

"Permit me not to congratulate you!" he said to Grouchnitzky.

"And why?"

"Because the soldier's coat suited you to perfection; and you will admit that an officer's uniform, made up here, cannot give you a very interesting appearance. Till now, you see, you were an exception; at present, you are like every one else."

"Say what you will, Doctor, that does not prevent me from having excellent reasons for being delighted."

"He does not know," he whispered to me, "what hopes these epaulettes hold out to me. Oh! epaulettes! dear epaulettes! your stars shall guide my steps. Oh! this is the acmé of happiness."

"Will you come and take a turn with us as far as the hollow?" I asked.

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“I! Not for the world would I appear before her till I have my uniform.”

“Shall we tell her?”

“No, I entreat of you. I wish to give her an agreeable surprise.”

“By the way, how do you get on with her?”

He looked confused, and became thoughtful: he had a great mind to boast a little, and tell us something of a falsehood; and, at the same time, his conscience upbraided him. Then, on the other hand, he could hardly make up his mind to own the truth.

“Do you believe she loves you?”

“That she loves me? but what are you thinking of, Petchorin? She scarcely knows me; and, besides, if she did love me, do you suppose she would tell me so?”

“Very well! and, according to your idea, a well-bred man ought to keep his passion equally secret?”

“But, my dear fellow, there is a manner—there are many things that one can make people guess without telling them of.”

“That is true; but the love which is only expressed in looks, does not bind a woman like that which speaks. Beware, Grouchnitzky! she is deceiving you.”

He replied, raising his eyes to heaven with a smile of satisfaction, “I pity you, Petchorin!”

He went away.

In the evening there were a great many people walking in the ravine. The learned and scientific of the place say that this hollow is but a worn-out crater. It is situated on the slope of Matchouk, about a verst

from the town. One gets to it by a narrow path through rocks and bushes. I gave my arm to Mary to lead her up the mountain, and during the whole walk I remained her companion.

Scandal was the first subject we touched upon. I amused myself at the expense of the present and the absent, beginning by ridicule, and passing on to more serious reproaches. My bile overflowed. At first I had only been unjust, but I soon became more bitter. She had begun by laughing—she ended by being frightened.

“You are a dangerous person!” said she. “I think I would as soon expose myself to the murderer’s knife, as to the wounds of your sarcasms. Seriously, when you feel inclined to speak ill of me, kill me rather. I believe it would cost you little.”

“Do I look like an assassin?”

“You are worse; far worse.”

After a few moments’ silence, I said to her in a tone of deep emotion,

“Yes; this has been my fate since childhood! Every one has thought they read in my countenance the signs of perverse and bad feelings; they imputed to me gratuitously things the most false; and those imputed sentiments have ended by becoming mine. I was timid—they said I was a hypocrite,—I became mysterious. I felt deeply good as well as evil—no one encouraged me; they endeavoured assiduously to rend and aggravate me,—I became spiteful. I was gloomy in the midst of gay, idle children—I felt that I was above

them, and they were placed above me,—I learned to hate. I was of a loving nature—no one understood me,—hate became the constant occupant of my heart. My joyless youth has been but one unceasing struggle with the world and with myself. I have repressed every good sentiment of my heart, and they are extinguished within it. I was sincere—none believed me,—I made myself an adept at dissimulation. When I came to know the world, and the moving springs of society, the study of life disgusted me ; I saw the ignorant succeed, and reap all the advantages that I had pursued with so much perseverance. Then I became the prey of despondency—not of that despondency of which one cures one's self by a bullet—but that carelessness of all ; a nerveless sentiment, which masks itself beneath the smile of good humour. Being now thus incomplete, in a moral point of view, I felt that a portion of the faculties of my soul were scared and blighted. I discarded them from my nature ; that which survived was good and serviceable ; but no one thought so, ignoring, as they did, that I had repudiated the best half of myself,—that half of which you have just reminded me, and of which I have read you the epitaph. In general, people laugh at epitaphs ; I do not see them in the same light. I consider less what they are, than what they cover. However, I do not ask you to be of my opinion. If this long-drawn speech has appeared to you ridiculous, laugh at it without restraint. I assure you I shall not be in the least degree offended."

At this moment my glance met her's ; tears sparkled

in her eyes ; her arm, which leaned on mine, trembled ; a bright blush coloured her cheeks : she pitied me. Pity, that sentiment to which women yield so willingly, had taken possession of her inexperienced breast. During the rest of the walk she was absent, and forgot even her natural coquetry. That was a significant symptom. We arrived at the hollow ; the ladies left their cavaliers, but she continued to lean on my arm. She heeded not the witticisms of our dandies. She walked on the very edge of the steep bank without the least fear, while the other ladies were screaming out and veiling their eyes.

On our return, I did not resume the previous conversation ; still, to all my liveliest remarks, she replied curtly, and with an absent air.

“ Have you ever loved ? ” I asked her at length.

She looked at me attentively, shook her head, and sunk back into her meditations. She evidently wished to say something, but she did not know how to begin. The hurried rise and fall of her bosom betrayed her agitation. How could it be otherwise ?—a muslin sleeve is a powerless protector, and an electric spark had passed from my arm through her’s. Nearly all passions are thus begun ; and we deceive ourselves signally if we imagine that a woman loves us for our merit or our physical advantages. Without doubt, these things prepare a favourable reception for the sacred fire, but it is the first touch that decides all.

“ Have I not been very agreeable to-day ? ” she asked.

The walk now ended ; we separated.

She is displeased with herself—she accuses herself, without doubt, of coldness. Decidedly it's a conquest ! To-morrow she will wish to make compensation. I know it all beforehand, and that's the bother of it.

June 12.—To-day I saw Vera ; she persecuted me with her jealousy. It seems that the little Princess has taken it into her head to make Vera her confidant. It must be owned the choice is judicious.

“ I foresee how all this will end ! ” said Vera, “ Allow that you love her.”

“ And if I do not ? ”

“ Then why these assiduous attentions ? Why excite her imagination ? I know you. If you wish me to believe you, go for a week to Kislovodsk. We proceed there the day after to-morrow. The Princess will not be there just yet. Hire an apartment near where we live. We shall have a large house close to the spring ; and next door there is one belonging to the same landlord, and which is not yet let. The Princess Ligovsky has taken the ground-floor of our's. Will you come ? ”

I promised ; and, that I might not retract my word, I hired at once the lodging in question.

Grouchnitzky came at six in the evening, to communicate to me the important news that his uniform would be ready for him the next day, just in time for the ball.

“ At length I shall be able to dance with her the whole evening—to speak to her as I will.”

“ And when is this ball ? ”

“ To-morrow. What ? did you not know it ? It

will be very brilliant ; the authorities are to superintend everything."

"Come and take a turn on the ramparts."

"Not for the world, in this hateful capote."

"What! has it fallen into disgrace?"

I went out alone, and met the Princess Mary. I engaged her for a mazurka. She appeared surprised and delighted.

"You will have to-morrow an agreeable surprise!" said I.

"How?"

"It is a secret that the ball will reveal."

"I thought you only danced for politeness' sake the last time!" replied she with the sweetest of smiles.

She did not appear to think about the absence of Grouchnitzky.

I spent the rest of the evening at the Princess's. There was no one there except Vera, and a most amusing old man. I was in a good vein ; I improvised several very startling anecdotes. The Princess Mary listened to my nonsense with so much attention and good faith, that I felt a sentiment almost resembling shame. What has she done with her vivacity, her coquetry, her caprices, her little disdainful airs? Nothing of all this escapes Vera. Her pale face has an expression of sorrow. She was seated in the recess of a window, buried in the depths of an arm-chair. I pitied her.

I began, then, the dramatic recital of my own adventure with Vera,—changing the names, of course.

I spoke with such earnestness of my tenderness,

my torments, the transports of our love; I placed her character in such a favourable light, that she could not but forgive my attentions to Mary.

She rose, came and seated herself near us, and seemed to revive. We did not separate till two in the morning; forgetting that, according to the rules for health, one ought not to sit up after eleven.

June 13.—Half an hour before the ball, Grouchnitzky treated me with a visit, equipped in all the splendours of his new uniform. To the third button was attached a bronze chain, from which hung a double eye-glass; his epaulettes, of an immeasurable size, rose on his shoulders like two cupid's wings; his boots creaked; in his left hand he held his gloves of cinnamon colour, and his cap, while with the right he kept dividing his newly-arranged curls. Self-satisfaction, and at the same time a sort of mistrust of his own appearance, were visible on his countenance. His Sunday-looking turn out, the proud way in which he strutted about, would have made me laugh under any other circumstances.

He threw his gloves and his cap on the table, and began to smooth down the skirts of his uniform-coat, admiring himself in the glass. A voluminous black cravat, which covered an enormously high false-collar, tightened in his chin, and stood above the collar of his coat at least half an inch; but he did not think that enough, and he found means to make it come up to his ears. By dint of all these painful evolutions, his face appeared red and inflamed.

"They say, that for some days past you have been paying the most persevering court to my Princess," he observed with an air of indifference, without even looking at me.

"Fools must drink tea somewhere," I answered, quoting from Pouchkin.

"By the way, do you think my uniform fits? The cursed Jew! how it cuts me under the arms! Have you any perfume?"

"What, have you not enough? One could smell you of rose-pomatum a mile off."

He threw half a bottle of some essence over his cravat, his handkerchief, and his gloves.

"Shall you dance?" he asked.

"I don't think so."

"I am afraid to dance the mazurka with the Princess—I hardly know a single figure."

"And you have invited her for a mazurka?"

"Not yet."

"Take care you are not forestalled."

"Ah, indeed," said he, striking his forehead. "Good-bye, I will wait for her on the steps of the door."

He took up his cap, and ran out.

Half an hour afterwards I went out: the street was dark and deserted. Around the hotel, at which the ball was given, a dense crowd had gathered. The windows were resplendent with light; the wind wafted me the sounds of the music of the regimental band. I advanced slowly, as if with regret—I felt gloomy.

"Can it be," I said to myself, "that my only mission here should be to destroy the hopes of my fellow-creatures? Since I have existed, and have been able to act, a species of fatality connects me with the windings-up of the strangest dramas; as if, without me, people could learn neither to die nor to despair. I am a personage necessary to the fifth act. I have always played the part of the executioner, or of the traitor. What can be the views of Providence in that? Am I destined to provide food for the imagination of the authors of citizen tragedies or romances? Who knows? How many people are there, who, after having dreamed of the end of Alexander the Great, or of Byron, die titular counsellors!"

On entering the ball-room, I hid myself among the crowd of cavaliers, to be able to observe.

Grouchnitzky was standing near the young Princess, and speaking to her with great animation. She listened abstractedly—carelessly, and kept looking around her, and raising her fan to her lips. Her features expressed impatience; she seemed to be looking for some one. I approached gently, that I might hear their conversation.

"You delight in torturing me, Princess," said Grouchnitzky. "You are terribly changed since the last time I spoke with you."

"And you also," she replied, casting on him a rapid glance, in which he had not penetration enough to discover a latent expression of irony.

"I changed! oh no—never! you know too well

that is impossible! He who has seen you once, will never forget your adored image!"

"But really!—"

"Why do you refuse to hear that, which so lately you heard without anger?"

"Because I hate repetitions."

"I have cruelly deceived myself! I thought, blind creature as I was, that my epaulettes would at least give me the right to hope. But no! Better a thousand times to have kept the soldier's capote,—to which, perhaps, I owed your notice."

"And, indeed, it suited you much better."

At this moment I approached Mary, and saluted her; she blushed slightly, and then said to me,

"Is it not true, Mr. Petchorin, that the gray capote suited Mr. Grouchnitzky better than this dress?"

"I am not of your opinion," replied I; "the uniform makes him look still younger."

Grouchnitzky could not bear this last touch. Like all half-fledged youths, he wishes to appear the full-grown man. He fancies that the deep traces of passion have given to his features the expression of age. He cast upon me a look of anger, stamped his foot, and walked off.

"You must confess," said I, to the young Princess, "that, although he was always absurd, he seemed to you interesting, when he was still an ensign?"

She opened her eyes wide, and seemed to fix them for a moment on vacancy, but made me no reply.

During the whole evening, Grouchnitzky pursued

the Princess ; he was either her partner or her *vis-à-vis*, and he never ceased staring at her. He sighed, and bored her in every possible way with his languishing, and with his mawkish reproaches. By the third quadrille she detested him.

“ I hardly expected this from you,” he said, taking my arm.

“ Of what are you speaking ? ”

“ You will dance the mazurka with her ? ” asked he, in a solemn tone ; “ she has agreed to it.”

“ Well ! is that a secret ? ”

“ I ought not to have expected anything else at the hand of that little coquette ; but I’ll be revenged ! ”

“ You may vent your rage on your capote, or your uniform ; but you have no right to abuse her. Why is she to be blamed because you do not please her ? ”

“ Then why give me hopes ? ”

“ Why did you hope ? One may desire—one may pay one’s court ; but who the devil ever thought of hoping ? ”

“ You have won your wager : not quite yet, though,” he said, with a grin of hatred.

The mazurka began. Grouchnitzky danced only with the Princess, and the other cavaliers vied with each other in repeating their invitations to her. It was clear there was a conspiracy against me. She wishes to speak to me—they prevent her. So much the better, she will only wish it the more, thought I.

I pressed her hand twice ; the second time she withdrew it without speaking a word.

“ I shall sleep badly to-night,” she said to me, when the mazurka was over.

“ And Grouchnitzky will have been the cause ? ”

“ Oh, not at all ! ”

And her face became so sad, and so pensive, that I promised myself that I would kiss her hand that very evening.

As she stepped into the carriage, I pressed, for a second, her small hand against my lips. It was dark : none could see us.

I re-entered the ball-room, very well contented with myself. The young men were supping at a large table ; Grouchnitzky was among them. As I came in, every one was suddenly silent, which showed that they had been speaking of me. I have more than one enemy since the last ball, and particularly the Captain of dragoons. For the time being, Grouchnitzky is, without any doubt, the chief of a band not at all favourably inclined towards me, he assumes such a lofty martial air.

I am delighted ! I love my enemies, but not exactly in a Christian point of view. They are for me a source of amusement, and the sight of them makes me feel that I still live. To be always on the watch, to catch every look, the sense of every word ; to divine their intention, play the dupe ; and then, at the moment when they least expect it, to overthrow, at a single blow, the whole edifice so painfully put together by their intrigues and combinations,—that is to me life !

During the whole of the supper, Grouchnitzky never ceased whispering to the Captain, and exchanging signs with him.

June 14.—This morning Vera set off with her husband for Kislovodsk. I met their carriage as I was going to the Ligovskys'. She made me a sign with her head; her look expressed reproach.

Whose fault is it? Why does she not procure me the means of seeing her privately? Love is like fire; it dies for want of fuel. Jealousy will perhaps achieve what my prayers could not.

I remained with the Princess a long time. Mary did not appear. The newly-organised cabal, which, for its arms, had adopted the opera-glass, was indeed menacing.

I am not sorry that she is ill. They have been boring her. Grouchnitzky's mane is neglected; he is in the very deepest gloom of despair. I believe he really is unhappy. In the first place, his self-love is hurt. How is it that, with some people, despair itself is laughable?

In coming home, I felt that I missed something. *I have not seen her! she is indisposed!* Am I by any chance falling in love? That would indeed be a farce!

June 15.—At eleven in the morning, when the Princess Ligovsky regularly perspires in the tub of Jermolof, I passed by her house. Mary was seated, looking very pensive, at a window. On seeing me, she sprung up from her chair!

I entered the ante-room. None of the servants were there. Profiting by the liberty one enjoys in these watering places, I entered the Princess's apartment without being announced.

Her pretty face was quite pale. She was standing near her piano, and resting one hand on the back of an arm-chair. That hand trembled. I approached, and said, "You are angry with me!"

She gave me a long, melancholy look, and shook her head. Her lips opened as if to speak, but she could not articulate a single word; her eyes filled with tears, she sank into the arm-chair, and covered her face with her hands.

"What is the matter?" I said, taking one of her hands.

"You do not esteem me! Oh, I entreat you, leave me!"

I moved towards the door. She sat up in her chair; her eyes sparkled.

I stopped and took hold of the handle of the door, and said,

"Excuse me, Princess; I acted like a madman. Another time it will not be so; I will be more careful. And why should you be informed of all that passes in my breast? You shall never know it—and it will be best for you. Adieu."

As I went out, I thought I heard her weeping. I wandered about on foot all day long, in the environs of Matchouk, and came home worn down with fatigue. I threw myself on my bed.

Werner called in.

“Is it true,” said he, “that you are going to marry the young Princess Ligovsky?”

“What?”

“The whole town is talking about it. All my patients are full of the great news. Nothing like sick persons for wanting to know everything.”

Grouchnitzky has been at work, I said to myself.

“To prove to you, Doctor, how little foundation there is for this report, I will tell you—but between you and me, mind—that I am going to-morrow to Kislovodsk.”

“And the Princess also?”

“No; she does not go till next week.”

“So you are not going to be married?”

“Doctor, Doctor, just look at me! Do I look like a betrothed, or anything of that genus? Tell me, now.”

“I don’t say that. But you know there are circumstances” (here he stopped and smiled) “when a man of honour is bound to marry; and that there are mammas who don’t know how to prevent these circumstances. I advise you, then, as a friend, to be more circumspect. The air of watering-places is immensely dangerous. How many young men, worthy of a better fate, have I seen go away from this place with a wedding bouquet? Even I, myself,—why they actually wanted to drive me into a marriage! It was a lady from the country, whose daughter was excessively pale. I had the imprudence to say, that if she married, she would

probably have a colour. The mother shed tears of gratitude, and offered me the hand of her daughter, with all her fortune, which consisted of fifty *souls* (serfs), as well as I can remember. I got out of it, by saying that I was little suited to a married life."

Werner went away thoroughly convinced that he had given me a salutary warning.

Nevertheless, reports unfavourable to Mary and to myself were circulated through the town. My dear Grouchnitzky, you will not be let off thus!

June 18.—I have been three days at Kislovodsk. I see Vera regularly at the springs, and out walking. In the morning, as soon as ever I am dressed, I point my telescope towards the balcony. She has already been dressed some time, and I see her hoist the given signal. We meet, as if by chance, in the garden, which extends from our dwelling to the spring. The revivifying air of the mountains has given her back her freshness and her strength. It is not without good cause that the Narzan passes for the best of springs. The inhabitants of the place pretend that the air of Kislovodsk predisposes to love; that all the romances are wound up here, after having been begun in the neighbourhood of Matchouk.

And, in fact, everything here breathes of romance and solitude. All is mysterious—the deep shade of the alleys of linden-trees, which bend and mirror themselves in the springs, that, murmuring and white with foam, flow amid the green mountains and the

dark silent caverns, whose ramifications diverge in all directions ; and the freshness of the atmosphere, redolent with the perfumes of the long grasses and of the white acacias ; and the unceasing and sleepy splashing of the streams, which, after having met in the bottom of the valley, pursue their friendly course till they fall together into the Polkoumok.

On this side, the cavern widens and changes into a green slope, up which winds a dusty road. Each time that I look this way, I fancy I see a rosy face peep out from a carriage window. I have already seen a good number pass by, but not her's. The village, built behind the fort, is very much frequented. In the hotel near the top of the hill, at a few steps from my lodging, one begins now to see lights in the evening, glimmering between the poplar-trees ; and, till very late at night, one may hear the sound of glasses.

Nowhere do they drink more Kakhethian wine, and more mineral waters.

“ Much good may they reap ; I rather choose
To leave them to double each other's use.”

Grouchnitzky and his cabal hardly ever leave the hotel ; he scarcely bows to me when he meets me. He only arrived yesterday, and he has already found means to quarrel with three old men who wanted to get into the tub before him. Decidedly, his miscalculations have stirred up his pugilistic qualities.

June 22.—At length they are arrived. I was at the window—I heard the sound of a carriage, and my

heart beat. That looks rather like love. I am so singularly constituted, that I can answer for nothing.

I dined with those ladies. The Princess was most gracious ; but she does not lose sight of her daughter.

This won't do—Vera is jealous of Mary. Such is the state of things ! What will not a woman be capable of, to wound a rival ? That reminds me, that one of them once loved me, only because I was paying attention to another person. The female mind is a paradox with a thousand faces. You can rarely persuade a woman ; you must lead her as you will. The arrangement of the proofs by which women overcome their prejudices, is, of all things, the most original. To understand their dialectics, one must begin by reversing all the rules of the school. Let us take an example :—

According to the logical sense, a woman will say to herself : “ This man loves me ; but I am married—consequently, I ought not to love him.”

In her own logic, this is the way she will argue : “ I ought not to love him, because I am married ; but he loves me. Therefore—”

Here there is a suspension, because argument has no further formula. It is the turn for the language of the eyes and of the heart—if she happen to have one.

And if these memoirs fall into the hands of a woman, “ What colouring ! ” she will exclaim.

Ever since poets have written, and women have read (which last is a great merit in the sex), they have

been so often compared to angels, that they have ended by persuading themselves—in the simplicity and the good faith of their self-esteem—that the compliment was deserved ; without remembering, that these same poets have made of Nero—a god.

I ought, however, to speak of them with greater reserve—I who have loved but them in the world ; who have never hesitated, under any circumstances, to sacrifice to them my repose, my ambition, and even my life. Do not mistake me : it is in no ill-humoured fit, or because my vanity is hurt, that I thus lift the magic veil that hides their imperfections, and which the most practised eye can scarcely penetrate. No ; all that I think of them arises from a cold temperament that judges without wavering, and a full heart that fathoms its own sadness.

It would be well for women if all men knew them as well as I ; for I love them a hundred times better, since I know all their little weaknesses. Speaking of this, I remember that Werner compares women to the enchanted forest of which Tasso speaks in his “ Jerusalem Delivered ” :—

“ At thy first outset thou wilt meet I know not what monsters : duty, pride, propriety, opinion, raillery, contempt, and Heaven knows what besides ! Heed them not ; pursue thy onward way ; by degrees these forms disperse, and thou wilt find a peaceful mead. Here, in the midst of it, myrtle ever blooms. But if thy heart tremble at the outset, if thou dream of retracing thy steps—thou’rt lost ! ”

June 24.—The evening of this day has been fertile in events. At about three versts from Kislovodsk, in a canal formed by the Polkoumok, rises a rock called “The Ring.” It is a doorway fashioned by nature. It is situated on a high hill; and through this opening the setting sun sheds his last rays. A numerous cavalcade went thither to enjoy the spectacle; although, to say the truth, not one of the spectators thought in the least of the sun. I was on horseback, near the Princess Mary. In returning to Kislovodsk, it was necessary to ford over the Polkoumok. The smallest streams are dangerous among mountains, especially when their bottoms present the aspect of a kaleidoscope: where there was yesterday a stone, there is to-day a hole. I took the reins of the young Princess’s horse, and led it. The water was hardly knee deep. We advanced with care against the stream. It is well known, that in crossing a rapid current, one ought not to look at the water, or one becomes giddy. I had forgotten to mention this to her.

We were just in the middle of the river, where the current is most rapid, when suddenly I saw her ready to fall from her seat.

“I am ill!” she said, in a faint voice. I leaned over her, and my arm encompassed her slight graceful waist.

“Look up, now,” I whispered softly; “it will be nothing. Don’t be alarmed; I am with you!”

She came to her senses, and tried to free herself

from my embrace. But I held her more firmly; my cheek touch hers, which glowed like fire.

“Oh, heavens! What are you doing?”

Without heeding her confusion or her fear, I pressed my lips to her delicate cheek. She started, but did not utter a word. We were behind the others. No one perceived anything.

As soon as we had reached the bank, every one set off at a trot. The Princess Mary slackened her horse's pace. I kept near her. It was evident that my silence alarmed her, but I had vowed not to say a word. I wanted to see how it would end. I was curious to know how she would get out of this difficult position.

“Either you despise me,” she said, at last, “or else you love me very much!” There were tears in her voice. “Perhaps you intend to laugh at me; to torment me thoroughly, and then leave me. This conduct would be so unworthy, so base, that the suspicion alone—oh, no! Is it not true,” she added, in a tone of tenderness and persuasion, “that there is nothing in me that forbids regard? Your boldness, I must forgive it, since I permitted it. Answer—speak! I must hear your voice!”

These last words expressed so clearly a woman's impatience, that I could not help smiling; fortunately it was already dark. I did not answer a word.

“You are silent!” she continued. “You wish to make me speak first; to confess that I love you?”

I remained silent.

“Is that what you wish?” she added, turning abruptly towards me. In her decided look there was a singular expression.

“Why?” I answered, at length, raising my shoulders.

She touched her horse with her riding whip, and set off at full speed along that narrow and dangerous road. All this passed so quickly that I had scarcely time to rejoin her, and even then not till she had overtaken the rest of the party. Till we reached home, she did nothing but talk and laugh. This agitation had something feverish in it. She did not once look at me. Every one was struck with this unaccustomed gaiety. The Princess rejoiced at seeing her daughter in this humour; while it was, in reality, but nervous excitement. She will not sleep to-night; she will weep. I was singularly pleased with that idea. Occasionally I have something of the vampire in me; and yet I pass for being good-hearted, and aspire to this reputation!

We alighted from our horses. The ladies went to the Princess's. I was unnerved. I felt the want of a gallop over the mountain, to drive away the gloomy thoughts that assailed me.

The evening was deliciously cool. The moon was just rising behind the mountain-tops. At every step my horse's hoof awoke the hollow echo of the ravine. Near the waterfall I let my horse drink. I, myself, eagerly inhaled the fresh air of the night, and returned towards home. I crossed the village. The lights were going out by degrees. The sentinels of the ramparts

and the Cossacks of the patrols answered each other through this silence. I remarked that one of the houses of the village, situated on the hill, was unusually light. The noise of questions and answers, crossing each other with great vivacity, and that of exclamations, which resounded from time to time, announced a meeting of military men. I advanced with precaution, and concealed myself behind a window. Through the badly-closed shutters I could distinguish the guests, and follow their conversation. They were speaking of me.

The Captain of dragoons, heated with wine, struck his fist upon the table, and asked a moment's attention.

"Gentlemen!" said he, "all this ends in nothing. We must give Petchorin a lesson! These coxcombs from St. Petersburg fancy themselves—Heaven knows what!—until they are put into their proper places. He thinks he knows the world better than any one else, because he wears yellow gloves and varnished boots. And then, his smile of protection! And, with all this, I am certain he is a coward. Yes; a coward!"

"I think so, too," said Grouchnitzky. "He likes to scoff. Once I spoke to him in a manner that would make a man, who had a proper respect for himself, draw his sword. He contented himself with turning the thing into a jest. I did not call him out, you understand, because that was his business. Besides, I did not wish to commit myself."

"Grouchnitzky has a spite against him," said one of the company, "because he has captivated the little Princess."

“What an idea!” replied Grouchnitzky. “It is true that I paid her a little attention; but I soon gave the thing up, because, not having any intention of marrying, I do not wish to have the young lady spoken about. That’s against my principles.”

“I maintain,” said the Captain, “that he is a right-down coward (I speak of Petchorin, not of Grouchnitzky)—Grouchnitzky is a brave fellow; and, moreover, he is my friend. Gentlemen, does any one here take Petchorin’s part? No one. So much the better! Do you wish to test his courage; just to amuse ourselves?”

“We ask no better sport; but how?”

“I’ll tell you,” said the Captain. “Grouchnitzky has reason to complain of him. The principal part is his by right. He shall seize upon the very first possible occasion, and call out Petchorin. Stop: this is the best way. He shall call him out, as for a duel: that’s all right. The challenge, the arrangements, the conditions, all shall be conducted in a formal manner. I undertake it. I will be your second, my dear friend. Well, all right so far! only the pistols shall be simply charged with powder. I will wager, with whom you like, that Petchorin shows the white feather. The distance shall be *six* paces. We shall see, by this means, or the devil’s in it! Do you approve of this plan, gentlemen?”

“The trick is capital—never was anything better contrived,” exclaimed all the guests.

“And you, Grouchnitzky?”

I waited with some emotion for Grouchnitzky’s

answer. Without this lucky chance, I said to myself, with cool anger, I should have been the butt of all these scapegraces. If Grouchnitzky had refused, I should have thrown my arms round his neck. After some moments' silence, he rose, held out his hand to the Captain, and said, with emphasis,

“I agree to it.”

This resolution was applauded by them all, with an enthusiasm difficult to describe.

I returned home, agitated by two contrary sentiments. The first was one of grief. Why do they all hate me? For what motive? Have I offended any one of them? No. Am I then one of those persons the sight of whom inspires a sentiment of ill-will? I felt anger and hatred gliding like venom into my breast. Beware, Mr. Grouchnitzky! I repeated to myself, as I paced hurriedly up and down my room. I am not the man to submit to this kind of pleasantry. The approbation of your friends may cost you dear—I will be the sport of no one.

I did not sleep a wink all night. In the morning I was the colour of a lemon.

That morning I met Mary near the spring.

“Are you ill?” she said, looking at me attentively.

“I did not close my eyes last night.”

“Nor I either. I accused you, perhaps, wrongfully! But explain yourself, and all shall be forgiven.”

“All?”

“All! But be frank: do not delay. See, I have weighed it all well. I longed so not to believe you guilty. Perhaps you fear some obstacles—some opposition on the part of my family—you are wrong. When they know—I shall obtain”—her voice trembled. “If your personal rank?—believe me, I can sacrifice all for the person I love. Oh! answer,—I implore you!—answer quickly! Tell me you do not despise me!”

In saying these words she seized my hand.

The Princess was on before us with Vera’s husband. She perceived nothing; but we might be seen by the invalids, the most envious, among the most curious, and I hastened to free my hand from her passionate grasp.

“I will tell you the whole truth!” I said. “I will not seek to justify myself, nor to explain my conduct. I do not love you.”

Her lips whitened.

“Leave me,” she said, in a faint voice.

I shrugged my shoulders, and turned away.

June 25.—Sometimes I am startled by finding that I despise myself. Is not that the reason that I despise others? My heart is closed against all noble inclinations. I should be too much afraid to appear ridiculous in my own eyes; any one else in my place would have laid at the feet of the young Princess *his heart and his fortune*; but the word *marriage* has upon me an effect as of magic. Whatever may be my love for a woman, so soon as she touches, ever so lightly,

upon that chord, farewell my passion! My heart hardens to stone, and it is over! I am capable of any sacrifices except that. I would risk my life, and even my honour, twenty times over upon a card, but I cannot resolve to sell my liberty. Why do I prize it so much? Of what use is it to me? Have I anything in view? Does the future promise me any compensation? No; none whatever. It is an instinctive fear, an indefinable presentiment. There are persons who have a terrible fear of spiders—of mice—taracanos. Shall I confess it? When I was yet a child, my mother had my fortune told by an old woman. She foretold that I should have a wicked wife, and that she would be my death. At that time it made a deep impression on me, and inspired me with an intense dislike to marriage; but, notwithstanding all this, I am perfectly certain that the prediction will be accomplished. I'll endeavour that it shall be as late as possible.

June 26. — Yesterday the presti-digitator Apfelbaum arrived here. They have posted a long bill on the door of the hotel, which informs the public that the aforesaid Apfelbaum, who performs the most incredible sleights of hand,—who is, at the same time, a dancer on the slack-rope, a chemist, and a physician,—will have the honour to give a grand representation, at eight o'clock this evening, in the Nobility's Hall. Tickets to be had for two rubles and a half each. Every body must see Apfelbaum; even the Princess Ligovsky, notwithstanding the illness of her daughter.

After dinner I passed under Vera's window ; she was alone on the balcony. This note fell at my feet :—

“Come to-night at ten up the great staircase. My husband is gone to Piatigorsk, and will not return till to-morrow morning. I have given tickets for this evening's representation to my household, and also to that of the Princess. I expect you—do not fail.”

“Oh ! oh !” I said, “at last !”

At eight o'clock I went to see the juggler. The saloon was gradually filling. In the back rows I saw the servants and the waiting-women of Vera in full number ; also those of the Princess.

In the first row sat Grouchnitzky armed with his opera-glass, making himself as conspicuous as possible. It was to him that the juggler turned when he wanted a pocket-handkerchief, a watch, a ring, etc. For some time past Grouchnitzky has not deigned to salute me ; but to-day he has looked at me once or twice most impertinently. He shall pay for this the first time we settle our accounts. Between nine and ten I rose and went out.

It was too dark to distinguish any object—a gloomy mist rested on the summits of the surrounding mountains. From time to time, but at distant intervals, a faint breeze just moved the topmost branches of the poplars round the hotel—the entrance to which was besieged by a dense crowd of people. I was descending by the slanting path of the mountain at a rapid pace. All at once I thought I heard some one following me ; I stopped to assure myself of the fact. The

darkness was too complete to allow me to distinguish anything at all. However, for greater security, I took a few turns round the house, as if I only meant to saunter about. As I passed beneath the windows of the Princess, I again thought that I heard steps advancing behind me. A man, wrapped in a cloak, passed rapidly by. These proceedings annoyed me. However, I glided to the front door, and hastily mounted the door-steps. The door opened. I felt a small soft hand on mine.

“Has no one seen you?” murmured Vera, nestling up to me.

“None.”

“Now, are you sure that I love you? Oh! I hesitated for a long time; but you make of me what you will.”

Her heart beat violently—her hands were icy cold. She began by jealous reproaches and complaints. She exacted that I should confess all, declaring that she would resign herself to my infidelity, because she only desired my happiness. I did not feel over-persuaded of this; but, to quiet her, I promised and swore all that she wished.

“So you will not marry Mary? You do not love her? Yet she thinks ——. Do you know that she is madly in love with you? Poor little thing!”

.
About two hours after midnight, I opened the windows, and after having tied two shawls together, I let myself slip down from the upper balcony, to the one

on the first-floor, holding on by a column. There was still a light in the chamber of the young Princess. I know not what demon possessed me to look into her room. The curtain was not entirely drawn. Mary was seated on her couch, her hands folded on her knees. A laced night-cap scarcely confined her rich tresses. A dark crimson shawl was thrown over her white shoulders, and her tiny feet encased in richly-tinted Persian slippers. She remained motionless in this position, her head leaning forward upon her brow. Near her, upon a little table, lay an open book; but, occupied by other thoughts, she had without doubt gone over the same page a hundred times. At this moment, some one seemed to move behind one of the bushes. I leaped from the balcony on to the grass, an invisible hand placed itself roughly on my shoulders, and a rude voice cried out,

“Oh, I have caught you! Deny now your nightly meetings with Princesses!”

“Hold him tight!” said another voice, that came from I know not where.

It was Grouchnitzky and the Captain of dragoons.

I dealt this last individual a vigorous blow on the head with my fist; he staggered, and I bolted through the hedges and arbours. All the walks of the garden, which covered the slanting ground on which the houses were built, were perfectly known to me.

“Thieves! Halloo! Call the guard!” screamed they. The report of a pistol was heard immediately afterwards; the wadding, still hot, fell just at my feet.

One minute more, and I was at home. I undressed, and went to bed. My servant had scarcely bolted the door, when Grouchnitzky and the Captain began to knock at it.

"Petchorin! are you asleep—are you at home?" roared the Captain.

"I am asleep!" replied I, ill-temperedly.

"Get up! Here are brigands! Tcherkesses!"

"I have got a cold. I do not wish to be chilled!"

They withdrew. I regret having answered them; they would have passed a good part of the night looking for me in the garden.

However, the confusion was great. A Cossack arrived, full gallop, from the fort. Everybody was up. They searched the bushes, the thickets; of course, in vain. This did not, however, prevent many people from being firmly persuaded, that if the garrison had been a little more zealous and determined, there would have been left on the field some two or three dozen mountaineers.

June 27.—In the morning, nothing was talked of by the bathers, but the event of the night. After having drank the given number of glasses of the mineral water, and walked ten times up and down the linden-tree avenue, I met Vera's husband, who had but just arrived at Piatigorsk. He linked my arm within his, and we went to breakfast together at the hotel. He was extremely uneasy about his wife.

"How frightened she was last night!" he said to

me : "and all this to come to pass just when I happened to be absent."

We sat down to breakfast, at a table near a door that opened into another room at the corner of the building. In this room were about ten young men. Grouchnitzky was among the number.

A second time did chance furnish me an opportunity of hearing a conversation that was to decide my fate. He could not see me, and consequently I could not suspect him of any attempt at quizzing me, which made him seem to me the more guilty.

"Were they really Tcherkesses?" asked one of them. "Did any one see them?"

"I will tell you the whole truth," said Grouchnitzky; "only promise me to keep it secret. This is the fact. Yesterday, a man whom I will not name, came to tell me, at about ten o'clock in the evening, that he had seen some one glide into the Princess Ligovsky's house. I must remark to you, that the Princess was at the juggler's representation, but that her daughter remained at home. I followed the person who had given me this information, and we stationed ourselves under the window to watch for the lucky seducer."

I admit that I was growing alarmed. Although my companion seemed entirely occupied with his breakfast, he might hear some things that would not be at all agreeable, if Grouchnitzky had guessed the truth; but, blinded by jealousy, he (Grouchnitzky) was far from suspecting it.

"Well," continued Grouchnitzky, "we were on

the very spot, armed with a gun loaded only with powder, for we only meant to frighten him. We waited in the garden till two o'clock. At length—Heaven knows where he came from!—it was not the window, which did not open; but probably from the glass door—at length, I say, we saw some one descend from the balcony. What do you say to this little Princess? Such are the ladies from Moscow! After that, trust to any one if you can! We wanted to stop him, but he tore himself out of our hands, and rushed through the bushes. It was then that I fired at him.”

A murmur of doubt followed this account.

“You don’t believe me!” he continued. “On the honour of a gentleman, I pledge you my word, it’s the plain truth; and to clear up all doubts, I will name you the person.”

“Who is it? Name him!”

“Petchorin!” answered Grouchnitzky.

At this moment he raised his eyes. I was in the doorway, standing right before him. He coloured as he saw me. I went up to him, and laying a stress upon each syllable, I pronounced, slowly, these words,

“I regret extremely, not having entered until after I had heard you pledge your word of honour to support one of the most unworthy calumnies. My presence would have spared you this extra meanness.”

Grouchnitzky sprang from his seat, and appeared disposed to fly into a passion.

“I beg of you,” I continued, in the same tone, “this very instant, to retract your words. You know

better than any one that they are false. I would not have believed that a woman's indifference to your merit, could have drawn upon her so hateful an act of vengeance. Mark me well, if you persist in maintaining your words, you are wanting in honour, and you risk your life."

Grouchnitzky stood before me, his eyes bent on the ground; he was evidently much agitated. But the struggle between conscience and vanity was short. The Captain of dragoons, who was sitting near him, nudged him with his elbow: he started, and replied to me petulantly, without raising his eyes,

"Sir, when I say a thing, it is because I think it; and I am quite ready to repeat what I have said. I am not afraid of your threats, and I do not shrink from any consequences."

"As for the last clause," replied I, coolly, "your conduct more than proves its truth."

And I left the room in company with the Captain.

"You are the friend of Grouchnitzky," I said to him, "and you will probably be his second?"

The Captain bowed pompously.

"You have guessed correctly," he replied; "and, moreover, I have a right to be so, for the insult he has received regards me personally. I was with him last night," he added, drawing up his ungainly figure.

"Ah! it was you, then, that I struck so rudely on the head."

He turned all the colours of the rainbow, and the

bad qualities of his mind expressed themselves at once in his face.

“I shall have the honour to send you my second,” I replied, bowing courteously, and as if I had in no-wise remarked his confusion or his anger.

Before the door of the hotel I met Vera’s husband ; he seemed to be waiting for me.

He seized my hand, with an air that had actually something of enthusiasm in it.

“Noble youth !” he said to me, with tears in his eyes. “I have heard all,—what perversity and ingratitude. After that, I hope, such fellows will never be admitted into a decent house again. Fortunately for me, I have no daughters ! But she, for whom you have risked your life, will reward you. You may depend upon my discretion. I have been young, and been in the service too. I know there are certain things one must not meddle with ! Good-bye.”

Poor man ! he congratulates himself upon having no daughters !

I called upon Werner—he was at home. I informed him of everything, of my dealings with Vera and Mary, of the conversation that I had heard, and which left no doubt as to the intention harboured by these gentlemen, of hoaxing me, by making me fight with arms that were not loaded.

“Now,” I added, “this is no longer a joke ; the affair has turned out differently from what they thought.”

The Doctor consented to be my second ; I gave him some information respecting the rules of duels ; he was

to enact that all should be arranged as secretly as possible ; for the reason that, although I did not object to expose my life, I had not any wish to throw away my future prospects. I then went home ; an hour afterwards, the Doctor returned from his expedition.

“Decidedly,” he said, “there is a conspiracy formed against you. I found at Grouchnitzky’s quarters, the dragoon Captain, and another person, whose name escapes me. I had stopped a moment to take off my golloshes. They were arguing loudly.

“‘I would not consent to it for the world!’ said Grouchnitzky, ‘he has insulted me publicly—before, it was different.’

“‘What is that to you?’ said the Captain ; ‘I take it all upon myself. I have been second in five duels, and I know what ought to be done. Every contingency is provided for ; only do not come and overturn my plans. We must frighten him ; it will do him good. But why expose one’s self uselessly to a danger that one can as well avoid?’

“At this moment I entered. The conversation ceased immediately. We argued a long time. At last, this is what we agreed upon :—five versts from here there is a deep ravine ; they will be there to-morrow, at four in the morning, and we will join them half an hour later. The distance is to be six paces. Grouchnitzky himself insists on it. The one who falls shall pass for having been killed by the Tcherkesses. Now I will impart to you my suspicions. These gentlemen—that is to say, Grouchnitzky’s seconds—have it appears slightly modified their

plan, and wish to load one of the pistols, Grouchnitzky's. This is something like murder; but in time of war, particularly among the Asiatics, stratagem is permitted. However, Grouchnitzky himself seems rather more scrupulous than his council. What say you, shall we let them see that we know all?"

"Oh no, Doctor! Don't be alarmed; I shall not be their dupe."

"What do you intend doing?"

"That is a secret."

"Take care:—recollect it is at six paces."

"Doctor, I expect you to-morrow morning at four—the horses will be ready—Good-bye."

I remained in my room till the evening. A servant came with an invitation from the Princess. I sent word that I was ill.

It is two hours after midnight. I find it impossible to sleep; and yet I ought to get some rest—if ever so little: my hand might tremble. To be sure, it is difficult to miss a man only six paces off. Ah! Mr. Grouchnitzky, your trick will not succeed! We will change posts. It will be I who will read on your features your secret disquietude and fears? Do you believe I will courteously present my forehead to your bullet? We will draw lots, if you please! and then—then! And if he should be more lucky than I? If my star deserts me? And in sooth it has been so long faithful to all my caprices! Well, then! now for death! The world will not lose much; and I myself am tired out and disgusted with life. I am somewhat like a man who is yawning,

and wishing himself away from a ball, and who does not leave it, because his carriage has not yet come for him. The carriage is ready—Good-night! I mentally recapitulate all that has happened during my life; and that leads me involuntarily to ask myself why I was born? Of what use has my life ever been? And yet I was destined for something noble and great, for I feel within me an extraordinary power. But I have been false to this high mission. I have yielded to the allurements of vain and empty passions: from the furnace I came out cold and hard as iron. The fire of noble instincts is for ever quenched—the flower of existence is withered. And since then how often have I played the part of the axe in the hands of destiny?

As a chastening instrument, I have fallen on the heads of the appointed victims; sometimes without anger, always without pity. My love has not caused happiness to any one, because I never sacrificed anything to those I loved. I loved for myself alone; for my personal satisfaction. I yielded to a strange longing of the heart. I have eagerly drained the cup of bliss and of anguish, and my thirst is still insatiable. Just as a man who, faint with hunger, falls asleep at length through exhaustion, and seeing in his dreams the most savoury viands, the most exquisite wines, feeds in imagination on these fancied delicacies, and feels relieved; when all at once the illusion vanishes, and he awakes with redoubled hunger and more deep despair.

Perhaps this is my last day of life; and shall I not leave behind me on earth one single being who has

understood me ? Some think me more perverse than I really am ; others fancy me better : some will say he was a good fellow ; others, he was a hateful being. The truth lies between the two extremes. Life is not worth regretting ; and yet one lives for curiosity's sake, in the expectation of—I know not what. It is alike sad and ludicrous.

It is already six weeks since I came to Fort N——. Maximus Maximitch is away hunting. I am alone, contemplating from my window the gray clouds that cover the mountains and hills : in the midst of these vapours the sun appears like a yellow spot. The air is cold ; the wind whistles and shakes the shutters of my room. To drive away the spleen, I have a mind to continue my journal, that so many different circumstances have forced me to lay aside.

I've read my last page. It is singular ! I thought I was to die. It was impossible,—I had not yet exhausted the sense of suffering ; and now I feel that I have a long time to live.

How clearly the past recalls itself to my mind ! Time has not obliterated a single one of its traits, not a single shade !

I remember perfectly that the night which preceded my duel passed without sleep. It was impossible for me to write ; a secret uneasiness pervaded my whole being.

I walked about my room ; then I opened a novel of Scott's, that lay on my table. It was " Old Mortality." At first, my attention was given to it with an effort ;

then I forgot myself, led on by the magic of the narrative.

At length the day dawned. My nerves were calmer. I looked at myself in the glass. My face was pale, and my features bore traces of sleeplessness; but my eyes, although surrounded by a dark ring, flashed with resolute and inflexible pride. I was satisfied with myself.

After having given orders for saddling our horses, I dressed, and ran to the spring of Narzan. On getting out of the tub, I felt that the revivifying freshness of the thermal waters had restored my strength. I was calm and full of nerve. Any one would have thought I was preparing for a fête. After that, let me not be told that the soul is independent of the physical constitution.

At my return, I found the Doctor waiting for me; his riding pantaloons, his *arkhalouk*, and his Persian cap, made him look so comical, that I burst out laughing. His face, which has nothing of a martial expression, appeared still more woe-begone in this equipment.

“Why this long face, Doctor?” said I. “Have you not a hundred times, with the most stoic indifference, sent people out of the world? Just imagine that I have a good bilious fever: I may escape, I may kick the bucket; this alternative is in the natural order of things. Look upon me, as you would upon a patient suffering from an illness which has not yet revealed itself, by its symptoms, to your experience; which thing would wonderfully excite your interest. You have an opportunity of making upon me some curious physio-

logical observations. Is not the expectation of a violent death a real malady."

This thought struck the Doctor, and he resumed his wonted liveliness.

We mounted our horses. Werner seized the bridle with both hands, and we set off. We had soon passed the fort, and crossed the village; taking a road half covered with high grass, and intersected by frequent swift-running streamlets, that we were obliged to ford, —to the great annoyance of the Doctor, because his horse, when once in the water, always obstinately stopped there.

I never remember a brighter, clearer morning, than this. The rising sun was just appearing behind the green mountain tops, and the mild warmth of its young rays, in their struggle with the cool freshness of the scarcely-dispersed shadows of the night, inspired one with an indescribable, but pleasing, sadness. The morning light did not penetrate into the ravines; it only gilded the crests of the heights, which on both sides overhung our heads. The tufted shrubs covered us, at every breeze, with a shower of silvery flowers. At this moment, more than at any other time, I felt how much I loved nature. Each dew-drop that trembled on the large vine-leaves, and in which were reflected, in rainbow tints, thousands of dancing sunbeams, attracted my admiring attention. With what eagerness my eye plunged into the misty depths of the valley! In descending, the path gradually narrows, the rocks become more imposing and more dark, and at length unite as if to form an impassable barrier. We rode on in silence.

"Have you made your will?" said Werner suddenly.

"No."

"And if you are killed?"

"My inheritors will find it all out for themselves."

"What! Have you no friends—not a word of farewell to any one?"

I shook my head.

"Is there no woman in the world to whom you would wish to leave something as a remembrance?"

"Doctor, shall I open my mind entirely to you? Look you, I have passed the age at which one dies pronouncing the name of an adored one—when one leaves to a friend a lock of hair, which may or may not remind him of the owner. In contemplating a near and peaceful death, I think but of myself. Friends, who will forget me to-morrow, or who will perhaps lay to my account, heaven knows what store of follies—women, who, in the arms of another, will laugh at me for fear of his jealousy!—faith, let them do as they will! From this stormy life I carry away ideas, but no feelings; long since, with me, the heart has been dead—the head alone lives. I link my passions and my actions together with curiosity, but not with interest. There are in me two men: the one lives in all the fulness of this expression; the other thinks and judges the first. The one is going, perhaps, to bid you adieu for ever; and the second—Look, Doctor! Do you not distinguish three figures, yonder to the right, upon the rock? They must be our people."

We spurred on our horses.

At the foot of the rock, among the bushes, were tethered three horses; we tied up ours in the same place; and arrived, by a narrow pathway, at a small platform, where Grouchnitzky and his seconds awaited us,—the Captain of dragoons, and a certain Ivan Ignatiewitch, whose surname I never learned.

“We have been waiting a long time,” said the Captain, in a sneering tone.

I drew out my watch, and showed it to him.

He apologised, saying that his own was too fast.

During some minutes, we remained silent. At length the Doctor, turning to Grouchnitzky, said,

“It seems to me, that, as you have both shown that you were ready to fight to satisfy the demands of honour, you might contrive an explanation, gentlemen, and end this business without a duel.”

“I should be most happy,” I added.

The Captain made a sign to Grouchnitzky, who, thinking I was frightened, assumed an important, swaggering air, in strange contradiction with his pale face and trembling hands. It was the first time his eyes had met mine that morning.

“Explain your conditions; and rely upon it that all I can do I will.”

“These are my conditions: you shall publicly retract your libellous accusation, and make me an apology.”

“I am astonished, sir, that you dare propose such conditions.”

“Is not this the only reparation I can accept?”

“ In that case, we fight.”

I shrugged up my shoulders.

“ Be it so,” I replied. “ But remember, that one of us shall fall.”

“ I hope it may be you.”

“ And I am certain of the contrary.”

He changed countenance, coloured, and laughed a forced laugh.

The Captain took him aside, and for some minutes they whispered together. I had come in a calm, peaceful mood ; but I now felt my anger rising.

The Doctor approached me.

“ Listen to me,” he said, with visible emotion ; “ you have surely forgotten what was agreed between them. I do not know how to load a pistol ; but in a circumstance like this—you are a singular man—tell them that you are informed of their plan, and they will not dare—what a whim ! They will fire upon you as upon a sparrow.”

“ Pray don’t be uneasy. I will arrange the thing so as to leave them no advantage. Let them concert.”

“ Gentlemen,” I exclaimed ; “ this begins to weary me. When people are decided upon fighting, they fight ; you had plenty of time yesterday to make your arrangements.”

“ We are ready,” replied the Captain. “ Place yourselves, gentlemen ! Doctor, have the goodness to measure six paces.”

“ To your places,” repeated Ivan Ignatiewitch, in a squeaking voice.

“ One word more. As it is a duel of life and death, we ought to spare no precaution in order that everything shall go off as secretly as possible, and so as not to compromise our seconds. Are you not of this opinion ? ”

“ Entirely so.”

“ This is what I mean, then : You see on the summit of that projecting rock a narrow platform. That point is at least two hundred feet higher than this ground ; it looks down upon the tops of these rocks. We will both stand at the edge of the precipice. In this manner the slightest wound must be mortal ; you see I completely fall in with your intentions,—since it is you who decided that we should fire at only six paces from each other. Whichever of us is wounded, will infallibly fall into the abyss, and be dashed upon the sharp rocks ; the Doctor shall extract the ball, and it will be natural to attribute this death to a false step. We will draw lots as to who shall have the first fire. I declare to you that I will fight only on these conditions.”

“ Well and good,” said the Captain, casting a look at Grouchnitzky, which betrayed their connivance.

My adversary’s face changed colour at every instant. I had placed him in a delicate position : in firing at me, according to the usual laws of duelling, he might wound me slightly, and satisfy his resentment without burdening his conscience ; but now he was under the necessity of committing a murder, or of firing in the air ; or else, in short, renouncing his unworthy sub-

terfuge, to fight me upon equal chances. I should not have liked to be in his place.

He took the Captain aside to speak to him. He was violently agitated, his lips were livid and quivering; but the Captain turned away from him with a smile of contemptuous pity.

"You are mad," he said, loud enough to be heard, "There is no making you understand. Lead on, gentlemen!"

A narrow pathway, or, as it were, a natural flight of steps, formed of fragments of rock, led to the platform I had designated; up which we climbed, holding on frequently by the branches. Grouchnitzky walked first, then his second, and the Doctor and myself brought up the rear.

"You astonish me," said Werner, warmly pressing my hand. "Let me feel your pulse. Oh, oh! rather febrile, or so; but your face is imperturbable, and your eyes are brighter than usual."

Just at that moment some pebbles fell at my feet. Grouchnitzky had stumbled; the branch he had hold of had broken off, and he would have slipped down the whole way upon his back, had not his seconds held him.

"Beware!" I called out to him, "Do not fall beforehand; it is a bad sign. Remember Julius Cæsar!"

At length we arrived at the platform. It was covered with fine sward, as if laid out purposely for a duel. On all sides the mountain crests, which extended as far as the eye could reach, seemed to press around

like innumerable herds. Towards the south, Elburz reared its hoary head, forming the limit of the eternally snowy top, around which floated the vapours that rose from the east.

I advanced to the edge of the precipice, and looked down. I thought my head would turn. The bottom appeared cold, and dark as a grave. The sharp rocks seemed to await their prey.

The ground fixed on for the combat formed a regular triangle. From the uppermost angle, six paces were measured. It was agreed that he who had first to encounter the fire of his adversary, should stand on this same angle; his back towards the precipice. If he were not killed, he was to change places with his opponent.

I was resolved to allow Grouchnitzky every advantage. I wished to try him: perhaps a spark of generosity would be found in his breast; and then all might be arranged amicably: but vanity and weakness were to carry the day. I reserved to myself to spare him, if fate favoured me. Who is there that has not made a like capitulation with his conscience?

"Now for the toss, Doctor," said the Captain.

Werner took from his pocket a piece of silver, and threw it up in the air.

"Eagle," said Grouchnitzky, whom a sign of command had just recalled to his senses.

"Rouble," said I, in my turn.

The coin turned on itself, and fell with a clanking sound to the ground. Every one ran forward to see it.

"You are lucky," said I to Grouchnitzky. "It is

your turn to fire first. But remember one thing: which is, that if you do not kill me, I promise I shall not miss you. I pledge you my word of honour."

He reddened: he was ashamed to kill an unarmed man. I looked at him fixedly. For an instant, I thought he was going to fling himself at my feet, to implore my pardon. But how could he confess so base an action? There remained but one way;—that was, to fire in the air. One only consideration withheld him: the fear that I might proceed with the duel.

"It is time!" said the Doctor, pulling me by the arm. "If you do not speak now,—if you do not tell them that you know of their plot,—all is lost. There; he is loading the pistols. If you do not speak, I will."

"No, Doctor!" I replied, holding him back by the arm; "if you speak, it will spoil all. You promised to let me act as I thought fit. Who knows? perhaps I wish to be killed."

He looked at me with astonishment.

"Oh! that alters the case. Only, don't reproach me in the next world."

The Captain had loaded the weapons. He gave a pistol to Grouchnitzky, saying, at the same time, something to him in a low voice; and then he handed me the other. I stood at the angle indicated; one knee firmly resting against a stone, and my body bent forward, that I might not fall back, in case I should be but slightly wounded.

Grouchnitzky placed himself opposite to me; and

at the signal agreed on, he raised his pistol. His knees trembled. He aimed at my forehead.

Unspeakable rage agitated my breast.

Suddenly he uncocked the pistol; and, with a face pale as ashes, he turned to his second.

"I cannot do it," he said, in a faint voice.

"Coward!" responded the Captain.

The shot was fired—the bullet slightly grazed my knee. Involuntarily, I advanced a few steps to lessen the distance from the edge.

"Come, my dear Grouchnitzky," said the Captain, "I am sorry you missed your aim. It is your turn now,—take your place. But first let us embrace, for I shall see you no more."

They embraced each other. The Captain could scarce contain his hilarity.

"Do not be frightened," added he, looking at him knowingly.

"Nature,—existence,—even fate,
Are things of little or no weight."

After this philosophic quotation, he returned to his post. Ivan Ignatiewitch also embraced Grouchnitzky, with tears in his eyes; and my adversary remained alone before me. Up to this moment I endeavour, in vain, to account for the feeling that then actuated me. It was resentment of wounded vanity, contempt, anger, at the idea that that man, now so calm and so composed, had tried two minutes ago, and without running any risk, to kill me like a dog; for, seriously wounded in the leg, I must inevitably have fallen into the

abyss For some minutes I looked at him attentively, endeavouring to discern in his face some indication of regret. I thought I saw him try to repress a smile.

"The best thing for you to do in the face of death," said I, "is to recommend your soul to God."

"Do not concern yourself for my soul, more than for your own. I only ask one thing of you: and that is, to fire quickly."

"And you will not retract your calumny—you will not apologise? Reflect. Does your conscience reproach you with nothing?"

"Mr. Petchorin," exclaimed the Captain, "you are not here to preach a sermon; permit me to inform you of the fact. End the affair: some one may pass this way, and see us."

"Very well. Doctor, come here a moment."

Werner approached: the poor Doctor! he was ten times paler than Grouchnitzky had been ten minutes before.

I pronounced the following words, in a loud intelligible voice, pausing upon each syllable, as though I were passing a sentence of death!

"Doctor, these gentlemen, in their hurry, have certainly *forgotten* to put a bullet in my pistol. I will thank you to re-load it."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Captain; "it's impossible. I loaded both the weapons,—the bullet of your pistol must have fallen out,—it is not my fault. But you have no right to reload it;—that's not the

custom,—it's against the rules of duelling,—I will not allow it."

"Very well," said I to the Captain; "we will fight, you and I, on the last-named conditions."

He remained speechless.

Grouchnitzky stood before me, silent and gloomy; his head bent forward.

"Let them do it," he said at length to the Captain, who was endeavouring to snatch the pistol from the hands of the Doctor; "you know they are right."

The Captain kept making all sorts of signs to Grouchnitzky, who would not even look towards him.

When the pistol was loaded, the Doctor handed it to me.

The Captain spit and stamped his foot.

"You are mad," said he, to Grouchnitzky; "stark, staring mad. Since you had left it to me, you ought to have minded me in everything. However, it's your own business; let yourself be killed like a fly."

He went away, muttering, between his teeth, "That does not prevent its being against all rules."

"Grouchnitzky," I said, "you have yet time; retract your calumnies,—I forgive everything. You have not succeeded in hoaxing me: that is enough. Remember that we have been friends."

His face was crimson; his eyes sparkled fire! He answered, "I despise myself as much as I hate you. If you don't kill me, I will murder you in the dark, at the very first opportunity. The world has not room enough for you and for me."

I fired.

When the smoke had vanished, Grouchnitzky's place was vacant: only a slight column of dust rose above the edge of the abyss.

A general exclamation was heard around.

"*Finita la comedia!*" said I to the Doctor.

Without answering me, he turned away with horror.

I shrugged my shoulders, and bowed to Grouchnitzky's seconds.

As I re-descended the narrow pathway, I perceived, in one of the fissures of the rocks, the blood-stained corpse. I closed my eyes involuntarily. After having untied my horse, I returned home at a walking pace. I felt a weight at my heart. The sun appeared to me dim, and its rays without heat.

Instead of crossing the village, I turned to the right into the ravine. The sight of man was painful to me—I wanted to be alone.

With my head bent forward, and with a loose rein, I wandered about for a long time. At length, finding myself in a spot entirely unknown to me, I turned back, and endeavoured to find my way home. The sun was setting when I entered Kislovodsk, not less exhausted than my steed. My servant told me that Werner had called, and left two letters for me; one from himself, the other from Vera!

I opened the first: it ran thus—

"Everything is arranged in the best possible manner. The body, completely disfigured, has been brought home; the ball has been extracted from the chest.

Every one believes that the misfortune is only attributable to chance. However, the Commandant, who has probably heard of your quarrel, shook his head, and said nothing. There exist no proofs; you may rest quietly. Adieu."

I hesitated some time before I could find courage to break the seal of the other note. What could she write to me? A melancholy presentiment weighed upon my heart. Here is this note, of which every word will remain for ever indelibly engraved on my memory:

"I write to you in the firm conviction that we shall never meet again. Some years ago I had the same fears. It has pleased Heaven to try me a second time. This trial I could not resist. My weak heart yielded to that well-known voice. You will not despise me for that. May I not hope it? This letter shall be a farewell and confession. I feel it to be a duty to tell you all that has been hoarding in my heart since it has loved you. I will not accuse you; you have acted towards me as every other man would have done in your place. You loved me as your property; as a source of the pleasures, cares, and troubles, which succeed each other in their turns, and without which existence is dull and monotonous. I understood that from the beginning; but you were unhappy, and I sacrificed myself in the hope that you would reward me for it at some future day; that a time would come when you would understand the depth of my love, which is independent of any conditions. Since then, a long period has elapsed; I have

learned to penetrate the secrets of your nature ; I have acquired the conviction that my hope was chimerical. I have suffered cruelly ; but my affection has grown with my soul—it might suffer, but could not be annihilated.

“ We part for ever ; but you may be persuaded that I shall never love another. My soul has exhausted upon you all its treasures, all its tears, all its hopes. She who has once loved you, cannot look but with a certain degree of contempt upon any other man. It is not that you are better than your fellow-men. Ah no ! but there is in you something which is your own, and yours alone—an indefinable mixture of pride and mystery. Whatever you say, there is in your voice an irresistible power. None know so well how to please at will—none possess to the same degree the secret of making evil attractive—no look promises the same amount of happiness as yours—none know so well as you how to turn to profit your numerous advantages—and none, in short, are so truly unhappy ; because none take the same trouble to persuade themselves of the contrary.

“ This morning my husband came to me, and told me of your quarrel with Grouchnitzky. Without doubt, my emotion betrayed me, for he looked at me long and fixedly. I nearly fainted when I learned that you would fight, and on my account. I thought I should have lost my senses. But now that I have well reflected, I am convinced that you will not fall. It is impossible that you should die without me—impossible ! My husband walked up and down the room for some

time. I do not remember what he said to me, nor what I answered him ; perhaps I told him that I loved you. I only remember that, at the close of our conversation, he addressed to me an insulting epithet, and left the room. I heard him give orders for packing the carriage. For three hours past I have stationed myself at the window, watching his return. But you live ; you cannot die ! The carriage is nearly ready. Farewell ! Farewell ! I am wretched, but resigned. Could I but know that you would never forget me—I do not say would love me always—no ! I would be content to live only in your memory. Adieu ! I hear some one coming. I must hide this letter.

“ You do not love this Mary ? You will not marry her ? Is it not just that you should make this sacrifice to me, who have sacrificed all to you ? ”

Maddened, bewildered, I rushed to the door-steps. I leaped upon my Tcherkesse horse, that they were walking up and down the court, and, without pity for the poor animal, set off at full gallop along the road to Piatigorsk.

The sun was disappearing in a circle of dark clouds, that had come up from the west ; the ravine was dark and damp. The Polkounok, in running over the rock, gave forth a low moaning sound. Breathless with impatience, I hurried on my steed. The idea of not finding her at Piatigorsk was like a heavy blow upon my heart, that crushed it. To see her but for a minute—one only minute, to bid her farewell—to press her hand ! In my present agitation, I mingled prayers

with curses—tears with wild laughter. No—nothing can convey an idea of my consternation and despair! The possibility of losing her for ever made her dearer to me than life, than honour, than happiness itself! Heaven knows what strange and furious ideas were clashing together in my brain; and the more I suffered, the more I spurred on my poor beast. I soon remarked that he breathed with difficulty: he had already twice stumbled upon smooth ground. It was still five versts to Essentoukof, a Cossack colony, where I could procure another horse.

If mine could bear up for but ten minutes, all was saved; but, suddenly, in making an attempt to climb a slight ascent, just at the fall of the mountain, his knees bent under him, and he fell. I leaped to the ground—I tried to raise him by pulling him by the bridle; all was useless—a feeble moan came from between his teeth; a few moments more, and he was dead. I was alone on the steppe—deprived of my last hope. I tried to achieve the remaining distance on foot. I staggered. Exhausted by the agitation of the day, and by a sleepless night, I fell on the damp grass, and wept like a child.

I remained a long time motionless, shedding bitter tears, and giving way to despair. I felt as though my heart would really break; all my firmness, all my coolness, had deserted me; my mind was unstrung; my reason slept. If any one had met me in that condition they would have despised me, and turned away in disgust.

When the night dew, and the mountain breeze, had refreshed my nerves, and I could collect my ideas, I understood that it was as useless as mad to pursue the happiness that was eluding my grasp. What do I ask? I said to myself; to see her again: and why? Is not all over between us? Would a melancholy farewell kiss add to the remembrance of our past bliss? Our separation will be only the more bitter.

However, I am glad that I can still weep! It is true that the agitation of my nerves—a sleepless night, two minutes in face of a loaded pistol, and an empty stomach, explain many things.

Everything is, then, for the best! This new suffering will have made a diversion for me, to use a military phrase. Tears are a relief; and if I had not travelled fifteen versts, full gallop, and as many home again, I should, probably, not have closed my eyes all night.

At five in the morning, I was at Kislovodsk. I threw myself on my bed, and slept the sleep of Napoleon after Waterloo.

When I awoke, it was already dark. I opened my window, and unclosed my *arkhalouk*, that the evening air might refresh my breast. The rest which excess of fatigue had procured me, had left me still agitated and feverish.

In the distance, and beyond the river, through the tops of the linden-trees which overshadowed it, I saw the glitter of the lights of the fort and the village. Our court was silent—there was no light at the Princess's.

The Doctor came in—he was gloomy; and, contrary to his custom, he did not put out his hand.

“Whence come you, Doctor?”

“From the Princess’s. Her daughter is ill—it is her nerves. But that is not what I have to say. The suspicions of the authorities are awake; and although there exist no decided proofs, I advise you to be on your guard. The Princess knows that you fought about her daughter; she told me so to-day. The little old man told her everything. How can one contradict him? he was witness to your quarrel with Grouchnitzky at the hotel. I came to warn you. Adieu. Perhaps we shall not see each other again,—they will send you somewhere.”

He stopped upon the threshold; he wished to shake my hand; and if I had shown the least wish to lend myself to it, he would have thrown his arms around my neck; but I remained of flinty coldness. He left me.

Such are men! They are all alike; they know beforehand what may be the consequences of an action; they aid you, they counsel you, contribute even to its success; because they do not see that anything better could be done; and then they wash their hands of it, and turn away from him who has dared to take upon himself the whole weight of the responsibility. They will all do the same, even the best and the most capable.

Next morning I received an order from head-quarters to go to Fort N——. I went to take leave of the Princess.

She appeared surprised. Having asked me if I had nothing important to communicate to her, I contented myself with replying, that I wished her all sorts of happiness, and some other phrases of like significance.

“And I,” replied she, “have something serious to say to you.”

I seated myself without uttering a word.

It was evident she did not know how to begin. She coloured slightly, and rapped her thick fingers upon the table. At length, with a faltering voice, she commenced thus:—

“Mr. Petchorin, I believe you to be a man of honour.”

I bowed.

“I am sure of it, I may say; although your conduct may appear in a doubtful light: but you have, perhaps, some motives that I ignore; now, I think you ought to confide in me. You have defended my daughter against a calumnious imputation; you have fought for her; you have risked your life. Do not reply. I know you will not admit it, because Grouchnitzky has fallen—(here she crossed herself). Heaven have mercy on him, and on you! I have no right to interfere in that. I dare not blame you; because my daughter, very innocently, without doubt, was the cause of this misfortune. She has told me everything, I believe so, at least. You have declared your love to her (she heaved a deep sigh). She has confessed her's to you. But she is ill; and I am sure that her illness is not an ordinary one! Secret sorrows

do not kill. She will not admit it, but I am convinced that you are the cause of it. Now, listen! Perhaps you imagine that I require a title, opulence,—undecieve yourself. I only wish for the happiness of my daughter. Your present position in life is uncertain; but that can be arranged. A career is opened for you. My daughter loves you; she has been educated in a manner to enable her to render her husband happy. I am rich; she is my only child; tell me what withholds you? You must see I would not speak to you thus openly; but I rely on your affection—on your honour. I repeat, I have but one daughter!”

She began to weep.

“Princess,” I said, “it is impossible for me to answer you; but permit me to have a moment’s interview with your daughter.”

“Never!” she exclaimed, rising from her seat, in the most violent agitation.

“As you will.”

I prepared to depart.

She reflected a moment—motioned with her hand for me to wait, and left the room.

I waited five minutes. My heart beat; but my thoughts followed their uninterrupted course. My head was cool. In vain I sounded the depths of my heart; I could not find in it one spark of love for the graceful Mary.

The door opened; she entered. Gracious Heavens! how she is changed! and so quickly!

When she had reached the middle of the room,

she staggered. I sprung forward to assist her, and led her to an arm-chair.

I stood up before her. We both remained silent. Her large eyes, full of sadness, seemed to try to read, in my countenance, something that might speak to her of hope. A painful smile hovered over her pale lips; her fragile hands, folded on her knees, were so thin, that I could not close my heart against a feeling of compassion.

"Princess," I said, "you know that all this has been but a jest. You despise me, without doubt?"

A faint blush rose to her face.

"And you cannot love me?"

She turned away, leaned her elbow on the table, shading her eyes with her hand. It seemed to me she wept.

"God help me!" she said, faintly.

My position was becoming critical; another moment, and I should have fallen at her feet.

"You see, then, yourself," I continued, with a firm voice, and a forced smile, "that it is impossible I should marry you; and, even if you desire it now, you would soon repent of it. The conversation I have just had with your mother rendered a frank and downright explanation necessary. I believe the Princess to be in error; it will be easy for you to undeceive her. You see how pitiful is the part I have acted. I admit that it is—that is all I can do. However bad your opinion of me, I submit to it. You see that it is impossible to place myself lower in the scale. Is it not true, that, had you loved me, you must now despise me?"

She turned round to me, pale as marble ; but her eyes flashed fire.

“ You have my hatred ! ” she said.

I thanked her ; and, bowing low, left the house.

An hour afterwards, I had left Kislovodsk ; whirled rapidly away in a *kibiltra*, drawn by three horses. At some versts from Essentoukof, I recognised, near the road-side, the body of my horse. The saddle had been carried off—without doubt, by some Cossack. In its place, I saw two crows at their work. I turned my head away, and sighed.

Here, in this wearisome fort, I often recall to mind all that has passed ; and ask myself, why I neglected to follow the course indicated by destiny, and which, had I taken, peaceful joys and tranquillity of mind, would no doubt have awaited me. But I could not have endured such a lot. I resemble a sailor, whose first breath was drawn on board a pirate vessel, and whose mind has been formed in the midst of tempests, and the whistling of bullets : thrown upon the shore, he feels weary and languid ; and, regardless of tufted groves, and of the brilliant sunshine, he spends his time on the beach, listening to the monotonous murmur of the waves, and seeking to penetrate the hazy distance. In the faint horizon, which separates the boundless sea from the heavens, will he not discover the wished-for sail,—at first sight, resembling the wing of a sea-bird, then gradually becoming more distinct above the foam of the waves, as, following a steady course, it nears the solitary shore on which he stands ?

THE FATALIST.

I WAS with a battalion of infantry on the left flank of the army, in a colony of Don Cossacks. The officers used to assemble at the quarters of one or other among them, and spend the evening in gambling.

One evening when *boston* was voted a bore, being tired of it, we threw our cards upon the table, and remained chatting. This was at the Major's. As a rare occurrence, the conversation became rather interesting. Some one made the observation, that the fatalism of the Mahometans had partisans among ourselves; and each related some anecdote, more or less striking, for or against the assertion.

"All this, gentlemen, proves nothing," said the old Major; "none of you have witnessed the facts which you advance, as proofs of your argument."

"Of course not," the others replied; "but these have been attested by persons incapable of perverting the truth."

"Folly!" said one among us. "Who has seen the register in which is inscribed the hour of our death?"

And were there really such a thing as predestination, what would become of our will, and what would be the use of our judgment? According to this hypothesis, we should no longer be responsible for our actions."

At these words, an officer, who was seated in a corner of the room, rose, and slowly approached the table. Every one was struck by the solemn expression of his countenance. He was a Servian, as his name indicated.

Lieutenant Boulitch's personal appearance was in perfect harmony with his character and disposition. Tall in stature, the bronzed complexion, the black hair, the piercing eyes (also jet black), the long straight nose (one of the characteristic nationalities of his race), the cold, sad smile that constantly curled his lips,—altogether gave one the idea of a being of a different class from those around him; and as incapable of sharing their ideas or their passions.

He was brave: he said little, but his words were always to the point. He had never mentioned to living mortal a single circumstance relative to his family, or his private life. He scarcely touched wine; and as to the young Cossack girls, who should be seen to be appreciated at their due value, he had never addressed to one among them, a single phrase of love or gallantry. It was said, nevertheless, that the Colonel's wife was not insensible to the glance of his large black eyes; but he became really angry whenever that subject was mentioned. He had, however, a passion which he openly avowed: that of gaming. Before a card table, he forgot everything; he lost frequently; but his constant ill luck

appeared only to excite him the more. One night, when we were employed upon a very serious expedition, he absolutely got up a bank upon the parapet. He had an extraordinary run of luck. All at once, the firing commenced: every one flew to arms.

"Put into the bank?" said Boulitch, to one of the most ardent gamblers.

"Well, seven!" said the latter, as he ran off.

Boulitch, cool and imperturbable in the midst of this tumult, dealt out the cards. The seven turned.

When he came up with the combatants, the affair was serious. Without heeding the bullets, or the scimitars of the Tchetchenetzes, he sought out the staker.

"The seven has turned up!" he cried out, on seeing him, at length, among some sharpshooters, who were just beginning to dislodge the enemy from a thicket, in which they had taken up their post. He went up to his man, drew out his purse and his pocket-book, and quietly paid him. After having discharged this debt, he chose his post on the field of battle; and never ceased firing till the affair was ended.

When we saw Lieutenant Boulitch approach the table, every one of us remained silent, in the expectation of hearing some original remark.

"Gentlemen," he said, in a calm voice, but rather below his usual pitch, "to what can all these vain discussions lead? You want proofs. I propose that you should make on me a trial of the following question:—Can man dispose of his life at will, or is the hour of

his death fixed by fate alone? Who will submit to the trial?"

"Not I!—nor I!" was heard on all sides. "That is a strange fancy."

"I propose a bet," said I, laughing.

"What bet?"

"I maintain that there is no such thing as predestination," I replied, throwing a score of ducats down on the table; it was all the money I had about me.

"I accept the wager," said Boulitch, in a low voice. "Major, you shall be the judge; here are fifteen ducats; you owe me the five others, and I beg of you to complete the sum."

"Very well," said the Major; "but I confess I don't know the point you dispute, nor how you will decide the question."

Without uttering a word, Boulitch left the room, and walked straight into the Major's bedroom: we followed him. He went up to the wall, against which were suspended arms of every calibre; from among these he took, at hazard, a pistol.

We did not understand what he could mean; but when he had loaded and cocked the pistol, several of us cried out, and endeavoured to stay his arm.

"What are you about? But this is madness!"

"Gentlemen," said he, slowly, "which of you will pay the twenty ducats for me, that I have wagered?"

All withdrew, without saying a word!

Boulitch next went into another room, and sat down at a table. We all surrounded him. He motioned to

us to remain in that position, which we did, still keeping silence. At this moment he exercised over us an inexplicable influence. I never took my eyes off him, and he gazed at me quietly, while a faint smile played on his pale lips. Notwithstanding his calmness and self-possession, it seemed to me that the stamp of death was on his countenance. I have remarked, and many old officers have confirmed my observation, that a man who is destined, within a few hours, to die a violent death, wears upon his face a deathlike expression, that never deceives a practised eye.

“You will die to-night!” I said to him. He turned abruptly towards me, but he answered calmly, “I may, or may not.” Then, addressing the Major, he asked whether the pistol was loaded.

The Major was agitated, and could not well remember.

“That’s enough, Boulitch,” said one of us; “of course it’s loaded: the manner in which it was hung up showed it. Why go on with this jest?”

“You could scarcely hit upon a worse,” said another.

“Fifty roubles to five,” said a third, “that the pistol is not loaded.”

The wager was accepted.

All these delays irritated me.

“Listen!” I said. “Either fire, or else put the pistol in its place, and go to bed.”

“Quite right,” said several; “let’s go to bed.”

“Gentlemen,” said Boulitch, “I beg of you not to

move." And he put the barrel of the pistol to his forehead.

We were petrified.

"Mr. Petchorin," he said to me, "take a card, and throw it up in the air."

I took from the table the ace of hearts, and threw it up. We could scarcely breathe. All our countenances expressed terror; and, at the same time, a sentiment of painful curiosity, as we glanced from the pistol to the fatal card, which turned upon itself and fell slowly on the table: scarcely had it touched it, when Boulitch pulled the trigger.

It missed fire.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed several officers; "the pistol was not loaded."

"That's what we shall see," said Boulitch.

He re-cocked it; aimed at a cap that was hung up near the window. The pistol went off. The room was filled with smoke: when it had cleared away, we looked at the cap. It was pierced entirely through, and the bullet was lodged in the wall.

During some minutes, no one could articulate a word. Boulitch, in the quietest way in the world, put my ducats into his pocket.

Some asked, why the pistol had missed fire the first time; others concluded that the touch-hole was stopped up; others, again, insinuated that the powder, the first time of firing, was damp, and that Boulitch had recharged the weapon for the second attempt. But I maintained that this last supposition had no foundation, for, during

the whole transaction, I had never taken my eyes off the pistol.

“You are lucky at play,” said I to Boulitch.

“For the first time in my life,” replied he, with a smile of satisfaction. “I have been more fortunate in this, than at the *faro*, or at *vingt-et-un*.”

“The chances were also rather more dangerous.”

“Well, do you begin to believe in predestination?”

“I believe in it! Only, I can’t make out why I should have felt persuaded that you were at the point of death.”

This very man, who had so coolly exposed himself to an apparently certain death, became suddenly confused, and changed countenance.

“That’s enough,” he said, rising, “the wager is won; and your observations are now superfluous.” He took his cap, and left the house. I was struck by the impression I had thus produced on Boulitch, and not without reason.

The officers went to their several quarters, speaking of the evening’s adventure; and, probably, imputing to me as a crime, the making a wager, the stake of which was the life of a man, as if Boulitch could not have killed himself, if he wished it, without my interference.

I set out for home, passing through all sorts of deserted lanes. The moon was at its full, and of a red tinge that resembled the reflection of a fire; she had just risen behind the jagged ridges of the house-tops; the stars shone peacefully forth from the deep blue sky. I smiled as I remembered that sages had once be-

lieved that these orbs exercised a fatal influence over our miserable quarrels about the possession of a spot of earth, or what men call their rights. These lights, kindled, according to them, to shine on struggles and on triumphs, still burn with the same splendour, while the passions and the hopes have long since passed away with the men whom they animated ! The celestial luminaries were to be, as fires kindled on the skirts of a wood, to serve as guides for the wandering traveller ! But, then, what moral force, what power of volition, would one not acquire by the conviction that the centre sphere of heaven, with its innumerable hosts of worlds, watched over the interests of men, and followed them with unalterable, though mute sympathy ?

And we, their unworthy descendants, who crawl upon the earth without aim and without pride, without enjoyment, without fear, except that which involuntarily pervades the heart, at the idea of an inevitable end,—we are no longer capable of great sacrifices, for the happiness either of humanity, or of ourselves, because we know and feel that that happiness is impossible. We float along the depths of our indifference, from one doubt to another, as our fathers used to pass from error to error, without either the hope that sustained them, or that keen, although vague pleasure, which it is the privilege of the strong to experience in every struggle, against their fellow-creatures, or against fate.

A host of ideas of this description floated across my brain, but which I have not retained, because I do not

like to give way to these abstract theories. And, in good earnest, to what can they lead? In my early youth, I was inclined to be a dreamer; I loved to caress, each in its turn, the dark or smiling images that my wild imagination conjured into existence. What did I reap from this habit? Nothing but that lassitude that one experiences after wrestling with the phantom of a dream—only sad and bitter recollections.

In these vain struggles, I have exhausted all the energy of my soul, all that force of the will, which is indispensable to the transactions of active life. I had scarcely passed the threshold of existence, when I had in imagination experienced all its casualties; while still a youth, I was fatigued and disgusted with everything, like an old man. My disgust was that of a man who examines the bad imitation of a work, with the original of which he is familiar.

The events of the evening had made a deep impression on me; my nerves were shaken. I know not whether, at this day, I believe in fatalism, but I am certain I believed in it at that moment: the proof was decisive; and although I had laughed at our ancestors, and their complacent astrological system, I had fallen into the same track. But I stopped myself in time upon this perilous road; and, as I hold it as a principle never to adopt nor to reject anything blindfoldedly, I threw aside metaphysics, to look at the path that lay before me, in sober reality. It was well I did; I was within an ace of falling over something large and soft, and which appeared to be inanimate. I stooped to look at

it. The moon shone down at that moment upon the road: I discovered a newly-killed boar. Almost at the same instant, I heard a sound of steps;—two Cossacks came running forth from a neighbouring lane. One of them approached me, and asked whether I had seen a drunken Cossack running after a boar. I told them I had not seen the Cossack, but showed them the victim of his warlike intentions.

“The scoundrel!” said the other Cossack; “when he has drunk too much new wine, he knows no one nor what he is about. Let’s run after him, Jeremeitch; we must bind him hand and foot.”

They hurried off; and I continued my walk towards home, with greater circumspection. At last I arrived, safe and sound. I lodged with an Ouriadnik, whom I liked for his goodnature, and because of Nastia, his daughter, who was pretty. As usual, she was waiting for me near the little door, wrapped in her pelisse; the moonlight shone on her pretty lips, that the cold had made pale. On recognising me, she smiled; but I was not in the humour to take notice of her.

“Good night, Nastia!” I said, as I passed the young girl. She wished to say something in answer; but she contented herself with sighing.

I shut the door of my room after me, lighted my candle, and threw myself on the bed. The day began to dawn before I even closed my eyes; but, without doubt, it was written in the Book of Fate, that this night was to be passed by me without rest. At about four in the morning, there was a knocking at my

window. I started up to see what could be the matter.

"Get up! dress yourself!" they called out from the street.

I dressed in haste, and went out.

"Do you know what has taken place?" said three officers, all at once; looking quite pale and horror-stricken.

"What is it?" I inquired.

"Boulitch is dead!"

I remained as one petrified.

"Yes; he has been killed. Come quickly."

"Where are you going?"

"We will tell you as we go along."

We set off. They told me all the particulars of this catastrophe; not without dwelling on the strange fatality, which, in the evening, had saved Boulitch from an almost certain death, to sacrifice him half-an-hour later.

He was walking in a dark street, when he met a drunken Cossack, who had just killed a boar; perhaps the man would have passed by without remarking him, if Boulitch had not said to him: "My friend, whom are you seeking?"

And the Cossack dealt him such a furious blow with his sword, that he cut him open from the shoulder to the heart. The two Cossacks that I had met, and who were following the murderer, ran up and raised the wounded man, just as he was breathing his last; he had but strength enough to utter these words:—
"He was right."

I alone understood the hidden sense of these words, which alluded to my involuntary prediction. My instinct had not deceived me, in revealing to me, in his face, the signs of approaching death.

The murderer had shut himself up in an empty house: thither we went. Women were there, moaning, in great numbers. Every now and then the Cossack would run into the street, with a dagger in his hand; at our approach, he ran away. The confusion was at its height.

When we arrived, a crowd surrounded the cabin, both the doors and windows of which were fastened inside. The officers and the Cossacks exchanged a few energetic words. The women wept, and made their several comments. Among them, I remarked the face of an old woman, which expressed deep and real sorrow: it was the mother of the murderer. From time to time, by the movement of her lips, one might have thought she was praying: perhaps she was muttering curses.

However, it was necessary to decide something, and to seize the culprit. None dared be the first to come forward. I approached the window, and looked through a chink in the shutter. The Cossack was lying upon the floor, looking very pale, and holding a pistol in his right hand; his scimitar, still dripping with blood, lay beside him. He rolled his eyes, with an awful expression; sometimes, seized with a convulsive shudder, he pressed his head, as if trying to remember his crime. I thought I remarked a degree of indecision in his haggard look; and said

to the Major, that the best thing to do, would be, to force the door, and to take the criminal, without giving him time to come properly to his senses.

At this moment an old Cossack came up, and called him by his name ; the other replied.

“ You have committed a fault, my dear Ephimitch,” said the old man ; “ you must submit.”

“ I will not submit !” said the Cossack.

“ Do not offend God ! You are not one of those cursed Tchetchenetzes, but a Christian. If you have let yourself be led astray and commit a crime, the only thing you can now do, is to accept the consequences.”

“ I will not surrender myself !” replied the Cossack, in a menacing tone ; and we could hear him cocking his pistol.

“ Halloo ! Mother, there !” said the old Cossack, “ will you be so good as to speak to your son ? perhaps he may listen to you ! All this delay is but sinful in the sight of Heaven ! And these gentlemen have been waiting fully two hours.”

The old woman stared at him, and shook her head.

“ Vazzili Petrovitch,” said the old Cossack, approaching the Major, “ he will not surrender himself ; I know him well ; and if we break open the door, he will despatch more than one of us. Would it not be better to shoot him through the opening of the shutter ? ”

Then, there came into my head a strange idea ; like Boulitch, I had a wish to tempt fate.

“ Wait !” said I to the Major ; “ I will take him alive.” I told the old Cossack to call off his attention

from me by speaking to him ; and, after having posted three men at the door, with orders to kill him, or to come to my help, at the first sign, I walked round the hut, and approached the fatal window. My heart beat.

“ You brute ! ” cried the old Cossack. “ Do you intend to keep us here much longer ? You think we shall not be able to manage you ? ”

And he began to batter at the door with all his might.

I observed, through the crack of the shutter, all the movements of the Cossack, who was far from suspecting that the attack would come from that side. All at once I forced back the shutter, and leaped into the room. A shot was heard,—the ball had grazed my ear, and torn my epaulette ; but the smoke of the powder prevented the Cossack from immediately finding his scimitar. I seized his arm ; the soldiers laid hold of him ; and, in three minutes, he was chained, and led away, well escorted. The lookers-on dispersed ; and I received the congratulations of the officers ; in truth, there was cause for them.

After this, how can one help being a fatalist ! But who can be convinced, that he ought, or ought not, to do such and such a thing ? How often do we not take, as a proof, what is only an error of the senses, or of judgment ? I love to doubt everything ; this disposition does not prevent decision of character : far from it,—at least, as to myself ; I advance with the more resolution, because I ignore what awaits me. What can happen to me worse than death ? Can one avoid death ?

On returning to the fort, I related to Maximus Maximitch all that had happened, and the scene I had witnessed ; I wished to hear what he thought about fatalism.

At first, he did not know the meaning of the word ; but when I had explained it to him, he said, shaking his head,

“ Well ! yes ! undoubtedly it’s a mysterious thing ! However, these arms—Asiatic arms—often miss fire. When they are badly greased, or one does not press the trigger strongly enough. I confess that I do not much like Circassian carbines ; it’s a weapon that does not suit us—the butt-end is too small ; and if one does not take care, the powder may burn one’s nose. As to their scimitars, all that I can say is, that I respect them infinitely.”

After a moment’s pause, he added,

“ This poor fellow ! the devil prompted him to accost a drunkard. However, it was, without doubt, written above, from the time of his birth ! ”

I could get nothing else out of him. Metaphysics are not his fort.

